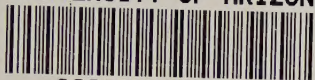



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THE LIBRARY AND SOCIETY

**Classics of American Librarianship**

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*Classics of American Librarianship*

Edited by ARTHUR E. BOSTWICK, Ph. D.

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THE LIBRARY AND SOCIETY

REPRINTS OF PAPERS AND ADDRESSES

WITH NOTES BY

ARTHUR E. BOSTWICK, Ph. D.

NEW YORK

THE H. W. WILSON COMPANY

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## PREFACE

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It may be desirable to repeat here the warning that the word "classics" in the title of this series is to be understood as meaning early and standard expressions of ideas that have later developed into prominence. The papers and addresses in this volume have been chosen especially with this in view, and as they emphasize social relations an effort has been made to include expressions from men of eminence whose names would not probably occur to the student of library economy as having expressed an opinion about the work of libraries or as having influenced it in any permanent way.

I desire to acknowledge the kindly assistance rendered in the selection and grouping of the articles by Mrs. Gertrude Gilbert Drury, chief instructor in the St. Louis Library School. It has been most valuable.

The original suggestion of this volume, and of the character of its contents, I owe to Dr. James I. Wyer, Jr., Director of the New York State Library.

ARTHUR E. BOSTWICK



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## THE LIBRARY AND SOCIETY

Recent progress in all directions—political, educational, industrial, hygienic—has been marked by the growth and strengthening of a social consciousness. It is this chiefly that has differentiated the modern library from its predecessors and has made prominent our present insistence on the reader as well as the book, as a fundamental element in what we are doing. At first evident only in a general and somewhat vague recognition, by writers and speakers, of a vital relation between libraries and the communities that they serve, it later crystallized into definite discussions of their reciprocal service—that of the community to the library, consisting of financial, material and moral support expressing itself partly in the appointment of adequate boards of trustees and their proper backing, and that of the library to the community, showing itself largely in the provision of books, the collection of information, the control and guidance of reading, and so-called “community-centre” service. These facts have guided the grouping and sequence of the papers and addresses that make up the present volume. The authors, it will be noticed, include more statesmen, publicists, and professional men, and fewer librarians, than was the case with the two previous volumes, thus reflecting the greater generality and wider interest of the subject.



## GENERAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In the following group have been included papers and addresses largely by publicists or educators interested in libraries from the general civic standpoint, and affected by the general trend toward what has been termed here "socialization." They have been loosely arranged in three groups—general ideas on the field, function and possibilities of the library, papers on books and their uses, as affected or promoted by the library, and general addresses, chiefly at the opening of library buildings. Within these groups they are given in general in their chronological order, although with some exceptions whose purpose will be self evident. Through them all runs the thread of consciousness that service to the community must be the primary object of the library, although the breadth and extent of that service, as it was destined later to grow and develop is not generally realized and in some cases doubtless would have been deprecated by the writers or speakers, could they have foreseen it. But in all these pronouncements we may clearly see the dawning light of a new library day.



## THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN AMERICA AND ITS TRUE FUNCTION IN THE COMMUNITY

This comprehensive sketch, by Professor Tyler of Cornell University, forms part of an address delivered at the dedication of the Sage Library, at West Bay City, Michigan, Jan. 16, 1884.

Moses Coit Tyler was born in Griswold, Conn., Aug. 2, 1835 and graduated at Yale in 1857. He was professor of English at Michigan University in 1867-81 and from the latter year to his death, Dec. 28, 1900, held the chair of American History at Cornell.

In this address, Prof. Tyler has added to his equipment as a philosophical historian his personal knowledge and experience of the service that a properly administered collection of books may render to a community.

Looking over the entire course of American society, from its rough and hardy beginning, in the first years of the 17th century, I find six distinct stages of development with reference to the possession and use of books by the people. The first stage is that of private libraries; the second is that of special institutional libraries, like those of colleges and other learned corporations, and intended for a limited and rather scholastic class in the community; the third is that of association or joint stock libraries, *i.e.*, libraries of a more miscellaneous and general character, but for the use only of those whose names are on the subscription list; the fourth is that of common school libraries; the fifth is that of endowed libraries, *i.e.*, public libraries founded and sustained entirely by private endowment and thrown open to the public without any cost whatever to the public; and finally, the sixth is that of free public libraries created, it may be, by private benefaction, but sustained in part



at least at the public cost, *i.e.*, uniting the two elements of private help and public selfhelp, and cherished by the public only as people will cherish that which costs them something, and of which they have some sense of real ownership.

But before proceeding to inspect these successive forms of library evolution, the fact should be distinctly brought out as applicable to them all, that the American people started on their career in this country with an uncommon interest in books; and say what one will about American philistinism and American devotion to the practical, this people have always retained that ancient and primitive homage for books. To an extent, I think, unapproached elsewhere, they are, and they always have been, a bookish people. In some other nations there is, undoubtedly, a larger leisurely class; and among persons of that class there is a profounder and more extensive contact with books than is the case with us. But while among most other nations, the craving for books is the propensity of one class, with us it may be fairly described as the propensity of all classes. A certain tincture of bookishness has pervaded the American people from the beginning. Perhaps the most decided quality of American civilization has been its effort to unite the practical with the ideal; its passion for material results ennobled by the intellectual and the spiritual; its fine reverence for studiousness, even amid the persistent fury of dollar-hunting.

And not only was this bookish trait visible in our colonial infancy but it may be said to have had an ante-natal origin. The two Englishmen who in the latter half of the 16th century did most to make possible the birth of American civilization in the first half of the 17th, were Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh; and both were men possessed by this large zest for ideas as well as for deeds; both were contemplative men as well as active men. The last glimpse that any surviving mortal had of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, before his ship went down in the sea, was of that stern hero sitting calmly on the deck, with a book in his hand, cheering his companions by telling them that heaven is as near by water as by land; and the last labor of Sir Walter Raleigh, before his judicial murder in the Tower, was to write one of the learnedest and stateliest books to be met with in the literature of modern men.

And this flavor of bookishness which belonged to these two great pioneers and martyrs of American colonization, seems to have passed on to the men who successfully executed the grand project in which they had failed. When you run your eyes along the sturdy list of the great colony-founders of the 17th century—the men who carried out the fierce task of conveying English civilization across the Atlantic, and of making it take root and live in this wild soil—Captain John Smith, and William Bradford, and Winslow, and Robert Cushman, and the Winthrops, and Dudley, and Hooker, and Davenport, and Roger Williams, and William Penn, you will find them all, in some special sense, lovers of books, collectors of books, readers of books, even writers of books.

And what is true of the leaders of that great act of national transmigration is true also of the men of less note who followed in it. The first American immigrants were reading immigrants—immigrants who brought in their hands not only axes and shovels, but books. Their coming hither was due to the restlessness inflicted by the possession of ideas. Books were to them a necessary part of the outfit for the voyage and the settlement. And so rare and so precious were books in those days that they were cherished as family treasures, and handed down as heirlooms; nay, they were so dealt with in wills and in contracts as if they rose almost to the dignity of real estate. In fact, in those days, the possession of an unusual number of books, with the reputation of using them, constituted a sort of patent of gentility, and seemed to bridge the chasm between the most widely separated classes in society; as when, in 1724, a young mechanic, named Benjamin Franklin, arriving in New York on a sloop from Newport, is invited to the house of the Governor of New York and is honored by him with a long and friendly interview, for no other reason than that the captain of the sloop had told the governor of a lad on his vessel who had with him "a great many books." "The governor received me," says Franklin in his autobiography "with great civility, showed me his library, which was a considerable one, and we had a good deal of conversation relative to books and authors. This was the second governor who had done me the honor to take notice of me, and for a poor boy, like me, it was very pleasing." So I think I am justified in saying that we started on our career as a

people with this underlying intellectual quality—a pretty general respect for books, love for them, habit of using them; and this is the impelling moral force which prompts to the several efforts which society has made for providing itself with books. Now, the first stage in the process of library evolution—and I have called it that of private libraries—was the prevailing condition of the American colonies during the whole of the 17th century and the first third of the 18th. This is the picture: Everywhere books, but few, costly, portly, solemn, revered, read over and over again; every respectable family, however poor, having at least a few hereditary treasures in the form of books, as in that of silver and choice furniture; and here and there up and down the colonies, an occasional luminous spot, drawing to itself the wide-eyed wonder of the surrounding inhabitants, the seat of a great private library, belonging to some country gentleman, or clergyman, or publicist, like that of Colonel William Bird, of Westover, or of the Reverend James Blair, of Williamsburg, or of Dr. Cotton Mather, of Boston, or of James Logan, of Philadelphia, or of Cadwallader Colden, of New York.

This is the first stage of library evolution. And, of course, it has its pleasant aspects; but surely there is here no adequate provision for the intellectual wants of the entire community. Very few persons in any community are rich enough to buy and own all the books they ought to have access to; and the existence of great private libraries in a few wealthy households can no more supply this general need of books than the great private dinners which are given in the same households can keep the entire community from going hungry.

Accordingly, the second stage in the evolution of libraries is away from mere private ownership and use, and is toward complete public ownership and use; but it stops far this side of it; it is the stage of special scholastic libraries, collected by colleges and other learned corporations, and intended for the particular use of the learned class—students, investigators, and specialists. The earliest library of that sort ever formed in this country was begun at Harvard College in 1638; near the close of the 17th century, another was begun at William and Mary College, and still another at Yale; thenceforward, and especially during the past eighty years, such libraries have been

multiplying in the land, so that at the present moment there are more than three hundred of them, and a few of them are now really vast library collections. The value of these libraries—who can doubt? Yet their direct value is only for a class; they are scholars' libraries, not people's libraries. This will not suffice; society cannot rest satisfied, and will not rest satisfied until everywhere good books for all are placed within the reach of all. The complete popularization of books is the goal.

So we come to the third stage of library evolution—that of libraries gathered and controlled by voluntary associations of people, *e.g.*, joint stock associations, but of course for the use only of those who subscribe to them and share in the expense.

Here we have a natural step forward; a goodly step; a step in the right direction, but still not far enough. We shall all agree that this is the strong and hearty modern method of doing difficult things—the method of clubbing together to do something; it is self-reliant, social, cooperative, mutually, helpful. What the individual cannot do alone a club of individuals can do together. Thus the hardest and grandest achievements of our time have been brought about—vast railroads, vast manufacturing and commercial enterprises. And so men and women, who could not singly get the books they wanted, have joined forces and have got them by combination.

It is a notable fact, however, that this third stage of library evolution was not reached until more than a hundred years after the first colonies had been settled.

Many of you, doubtless, in wandering about Philadelphia—perhaps during our great centennial visit to that city—may have noticed the venerable building of the Philadelphia Library company, and in the walls of it an old tablet with this inscription: “Be it remembered in honor of the Philadelphia youth (then chiefly artificers) that, in 1731, they cheerfully, at the suggestion of Benjamin Franklin, one of their number, instituted the Philadelphia Library, which though small at first, is become highly valuable and extensively useful, and which the walls of this building are now destined to contain and preserve.” Now, in reality, that year 1731, when that first subscription library was started in America, begins a new epoch in the intellectual life of the American people, the epoch of systematic cooperation for the procurement by the people of the great intellectual and

spiritual boon of books. Immense results have followed from that example set in 1731. Therefore, let us stop a moment longer, and listen to Benjamin Franklin's own account of the way in which he came to think of that capital project. "At the time I established myself in Pennsylvania, there was not a good bookseller's shop in any of the colonies to the southward of Boston. Those who loved reading were obliged to send for their books from England; the members of the Junto had each a few. We had left the alehouse, where we first met, and hired a room to hold our club in. I proposed that we should all of us bring our books to that room; where they would not only be ready to consult in our conferences, but become a common benefit, each of us being at liberty to borrow such as he wished to read at home. This was accordingly done, and for some time contented us. Finding the advantage of this little collection, I proposed to render the benefit from the books more common by commencing a public subscription library. I drew a sketch of the plan and rules that would be necessary, and got a skilful conveyancer to put the whole in form of articles of agreement to be subscribed; by which each subscriber engaged to pay a certain sum down for the first purchase of the books and an annual contribution for increasing them. So few were the readers at that time in Philadelphia, and the majority of us so poor, that I was not able with great industry to find more than fifty persons, mostly young tradesmen, willing to pay down for this purpose forty shillings each and ten shillings per annum. With this little fund we began. The books were imported; the library was opened one day in the week for lending them to the subscribers, on their promissory notes to pay double the value if not duly returned. The institution soon manifested its utility, was imitated by other towns and in other provinces. The libraries were augmented by donations; reading became fashionable; and our people, having no public amusements to divert their attention from study, became better acquainted with books; and in a few years were observed by strangers to be better instructed, and more intelligent, than people of the same rank generally are in other countries."

I think you will agree with me that this is a very striking bit of testimony, too much so to permit us to hurry past it. Note these few things about it.



In the first place, that device of Franklin's, started in 1731—what does it really signify in our history? It signifies this. It signifies a new departure for mankind—the application of the democratic spirit to the distribution of intellectual advantages. These things called books—these bewitched and bewitching fabrics of paper and ink, which somehow contain the accumulated thought of all nations and of all centuries, and can communicate to us the noblest pleasures and the most godlike powers—these potent things, in all the ages before, had been accessible only to some few fortunate human beings—to a privileged class—to rich men who wished them—to scholars who could win their way to them—in short, to an aristocracy of intellectual privileges. But in 1731, by that modest device of Benjamin Franklin, the democratic spirit—the modern humane spirit—the spirit which in its true nature is a levelling spirit only in this grand sense that it levels upward and not downward, and raises the general average of human intelligence and felicity—this benign and mighty democratic spirit, I say, which was then marching with gentle but invincible footsteps along all avenues and pathways of modern life, and was laying its miraculous touch on church and state, on kings and priests and peasants, on the laws and law-makers and law-breakers, on all the old activities of society, on the old adjustments of human relations, that spirit then began to touch this relation also, the relation of man to the superb and royal realm of books. And the first effect of that touch was what? It was enlargement, liberalization, extension of intellectual opportunity for man simply as man. Hitherto books had been the privilege of the privileged class. In effect, Franklin says: They shall be so no more. In this year 1731 I set agoing a device concerning books which shall abolish the privileged class by making all classes privileged, and shall finally result in placing the blessings of books within the reach of all.

But, in the second place, in that year 1731, who was Franklin who did all that, and who were the persons who helped to do it? He and they were young men; obscure men, poor men, laboring men; mechanics and tradesmen of the town where they lived; young men just getting a start in the world. So this new era in the brain life of the American people had its beginning with such as they were. Who of us, therefore, how-

ever modest be our lot in life, has any right to say to himself, "I am not in position to do anything for the advancement of my race"? Nay; my brother, think of young Ben Franklin, the printer, and his 50 brother mechanics; remember what they accomplished; and do not despair of being useful in your time also. And in the third place, this movement came from those young men associated together in a social debating club. It was their experience in the actual discussion of the problems of human thought which made them feel the need of books and suggested this great measure for popularizing books: a fact which fits in well with Mr. Sage's idea of blending the two things together here; of giving perpetual house-room and hospitality to a debating club, here, in the very midst of this library. And now the fourth point is, that the plan started by Franklin and those other young mechanics in Philadelphia, in 1731, the plan of joint-stock library associations, worked so well there that, as Franklin tells, it was taken up in other provinces. Naturally, the new plan was adopted first in the towns where it was heard of first—the towns nearest to Philadelphia. But before many years, the news of it had travelled far, to the southward and the northward, and whether consciously or unconsciously the model set up in Philadelphia, was imitated, with more or less closeness, in scores of places far away. One curious example springs up in South Carolina. It is in the Georgetown district, then given to the growth of indigo. A number of the planters came together and formed the Winyaw Indigo Society. Their chief business was to have a pleasant time together and talk indigo; they paid their initiation fees in indigo; they paid their annual dues in indigo; and presently they found their treasury so full and overflowing with indigo, that they resolved to devote their surplus in part to the formation of the Indigo Society Library. Then, too, at about the same time in Charleston, seventeen young men, of very limited means, desirous of seeing the best and freshest English magazines, formed a club for that purpose, and started with a fund of ten pounds sterling, not venturing at first to hope to be able to purchase books also. Soon, however, their plan grew and took in books; and from this small beginning arose the great "Library Society" of Charleston, which has ministered to the pleasure and benefit of the people of that place for nearly a century and a half.

But the Philadelphia plan travelled northward as well as southward. In 1747, at Newport, Rhode Island, was formed, also out of a discussion club, the famous Redwood Library, which lives and flourishes still. In 1753 the Providence Library was started on the same general plan; in 1754, the New York Society Library; in 1760, the Social Library at Salem, Massachusetts; in 1763, similar libraries at Lancaster and at Portland, Maine; in 1753, a similar one at Hingham; and so on throughout the country.

One of the most curious of these joint-stock library associations was one formed in 1751 in three parishes in the towns of York and Kittery, Maine, and called the "Revolving Library." It was not a circulating library—that being the name of a library from which the books circulate singly and in units; but it was called a "revolving library" because the entire library was to revolve, in bulk, on its own axes, in an orbit including the parsonages of the three parishes embraced in the scheme. And thus this library began to revolve from parsonage to parsonage more than 130 years ago; and it has been revolving ever since, occasionally encountering some queer experiences, as when, about 15 years ago, it was found by the new pastor of Kittery Point in the garret of the parsonage, "dumped down on the attic floor like a load of coal," the wife of the former incumbent having had a prejudice against books for sanitary reasons, "considering them unhealthy, and so being unwilling to have them in any living room" where their presence might communicate diseases to the family.

This, of course, is a rather eccentric specimen of the class of libraries now under view. A very good normal example of the class is furnished us by the social library of Castine, Maine, organized in 1801; and its articles of association I desire to read to you as exhibiting the scope and spirit of this whole movement for supplying the public with books through jointstock companies. The articles of association are as follows: "It is proposed by the persons whose names are here subjoined to establish a social library in this town. It is greatly to be lamented that excellent abilities are not unfrequently doomed to obscurity by reason of poverty; that the rich purchase almost everything but books; and that reading has become so unfashionable an amusement in what we are pleased to call this enlightened age and country. To remedy these evils; to excite a

fondness for books; to afford the most rational and profitable amusement; to prevent idleness and immorality; and to promote the diffusion of useful knowledge, piety, and virtue, at an expense which small pecuniary abilities can afford, we are induced to associate for the above purposes; and each agrees to pay for the number of shares owned, and annexed to his name at \$5 per share."

The first public library in the north-west was established by an association formed at Marietta, Ohio, in 1796. Then followed similar libraries at Cincinnati, and at Ames, Athens County. The latter, which was formed as early as 1802, had a curious origin. It was popularly known as the "Coon-skin Library." The hardy pioneers of that township of Ames met together, it seems, to consider the subject of roads; and, having considered it, they proceeded to consider also the subject of books—a fine illustration, I think, of the blending of the practical and the ideal in the American character and in American civilization. Here were these sturdy pioneers projecting a public library even before they had got their public roads cut out and put in order. What is called money hardly existed among them; but they knew how to shoot bears and to catch coons and to take their skins, and these skins could be sent to Boston and sold for cash, and the money invested in books. This accordingly was done. The noted politician, Thomas Ewing, then a boy at Ames, gives this account of the affair: "All my accumulated wealth, ten coon-skins, went into the fund," the total amount of which proved to be about \$100. "Squire Sam Brown, of Sunday Creek, who was going to Boston, was charged with the purchase. After an absence of many weeks, he brought the books to Capt. Ben Brown's, in a sack on a pack-horse. I was present at the untying of the sack and pouring out of the treasures. There were about 60 volumes, I think, and well selected; the library of the Vatican was nothing to it, and there never was a library better read. This, with occasional additions, furnished me with reading while I remained at home."

That is the stuff of which strong men are made, and strong communities, and mighty nations. And what was done at Marietta, and at Cincinnati, and at Ames, was done in a multitude of other towns all over the north-west. At Vincennes, Indiana, a library was started by similar means in 1807; and one

of the founders was Gen. Wm. Henry Harrison, the hero of Tippecanoe and hard cider. That was the first public library established in Indiana.

So, too, in Michigan, far back in its territorial days, similar libraries were formed, especially that of the Young Men's Society of Detroit. But in Michigan, by far the greatest service in this direction has been rendered more recently by the ladies, whose admirable library associations in such towns as Ann Arbor, Flint, and Kalamazoo have done much, especially during the past twenty years, for the literary improvement and enjoyment of the people.

But this third stage of library evolution, good and useful as it has been during the past 150 years, has this defect: it does not offer books freely to all who would like books; it is limited to those who participate in its privileges by paying for them.

Therefore society pushed forward into a fourth stage of evolution—one still nearer to the grand object to be reached—the complete popularization of books. This fourth stage was reached chiefly through a new idea entering into the case, namely, the duty of the state to help in providing books for the people who compose the state. The principle is already admitted that the state must educate its citizens, and for that purpose must sustain schools. For the same purpose, and on the same principle, it must sustain libraries; for these are but an annex to schools, and the books in them are only a part of the necessary apparatus for public education.

In this way was started the fourth plan, that of "district school libraries," a plan which for a while was hailed with delight as a real contribution to human progress and happiness; which was eagerly adopted in this state and in many others; but which has, upon the whole, resulted in failure.

The State of New York has the honor of having started this plan, which was first publicly advocated by Governor De Witt Clinton, in his message for 1826. In 1838 General John A. Dix, then secretary of state, was "charged with the execution of the law giving to the school districts \$55,000 a year to buy books for their libraries, and requiring them to raise by taxation an equal amount for same purpose." The system was received throughout the state with enthusiastic favor. In 1841 the school libraries of the state reported the possession of



422,459 volumes; in the following year, 200,000 volumes more; and in 1853 they had reached the enormous number of 1,604,210 volumes.

The plan as advocated in New York soon passed over into Massachusetts, where it was taken up and advocated by Horace Mann, that noble-minded and eloquent champion of popular enlightenment. Through his influence the necessary law was passed in 1837, but the operation of the plan was never very successful in that state, and after twelve years had resulted in the accumulation of only 42,707 volumes.

Michigan appears to have been abreast of Massachusetts in the adoption of the plan of district school libraries, incorporating it into its school law of 1837.

After New York, Massachusetts, and Michigan, the several other states which adopted this plan did so in the following order: Connecticut in 1839; Rhode Island and Iowa in 1840; Indiana in 1841; Maine in 1844; Ohio in 1847; Wisconsin in 1848; Missouri in 1853; California and Oregon in 1854; Illinois in 1855; Kansas and Virginia in 1870; New Jersey in 1871; Kentucky and Minnesota in 1873; and Colorado in 1876.

These data will give you some idea of the wide extension of this fourth stage in library evolution. Its merits are very great. Perhaps its greatest merit is that it recognizes the true function of the public library as a part of the system of public education, and therefore as entitled to a share in public taxation. Moreover, it has undoubtedly done a vast amount of good in placing the means of intellectual improvement within the reach of millions of people of all ages; it has stimulated the love of books and diffused knowledge and happiness. And yet with all these merits, it has been a failure; and this is largely due to just three defects in administration:

1. Lack of care and wisdom in the selection of the books, resulting in the acquisition of many volumes of trash and of profligacy.
2. Lack of care as to the distribution and return of the books, resulting in their rapid dispersion and disappearance.
3. Lack of care in the preservation of the books that were not strayed and stolen, resulting in their rapid deterioration.

You have got to apply business principles to the handling of books, as well as of any other material possessions. Libraries

as well as sawmills need to be dealt with according to common-sense and with efficiency. Now upon the general failure of these libraries, let me quote for you a little testimony. The superintendent of schools in New York State, in 1875, says: "The system has not worked well in this state. . . . The libraries have fallen into disuse, and have become practically valueless." [1 Pub. lib. of U. S., i. 41.]

The superintendent for 1861 says that in "nearly every quarter of the state," the libraries are "almost totally unused and rapidly deteriorating." [2 Pub. Lib. of U. S. i. 40.] For 1862, the superintendent gives a more detailed picture of the condition of the school libraries. He finds them "mainly represented by a motley collection of books, ranging from 'Headley's sacred mountains' to the 'Pirate's own book,' numbering in the aggregate a million and a half of volumes, scattered among the various families, constituting a part of the family library, or serving as toys for children in the nursery; . . . crowded into cupboards, thrown into cellars, stowed away in lofts, exposed to the action of water, the sun, and of fire, or more frequently locked away into darkness unrelieved and silence unbroken." [2 Pub. Lib. of U. S. i. 40.]

This graphic picture of the failure of the system in New York is perhaps matched by a similar picture of its failure in Michigan, as drawn by our superintendent of education in 1869:

"The books were distributed to the districts by the town clerk to be returned by the directors every third month for exchange. This would now require more than 60,000 miles' travel per annum, at a positive expense to the directors, certainly, of \$100,000, to say nothing of more than 10,000 days' time. This was like putting two locomotives ahead of each other to draw a hand-car. The result was the books were generally hidden away in the clerks' offices, like monks in their cloister, and valueless to the world. And what kind of books were they? Some good ones, doubtless; but generally it was better to sow oats in the dust than to cover those books than to give them to the young to read. Every year, soon after the taxes were collected, the state swarmed with pedlers, with all the unsalable books of Eastern houses—the sensational novels of all ages, tales of piracy, murders, and love intrigues—the yellow-covered literature of the world."



Finally, the superintendent for 1873 says: "The whole system seems to have come into general disfavor; and is, more than any other feature of our school system, the one of which we are least proud."

Now we come to the fifth stage in the evolution of libraries—that of libraries fully endowed by private generosity, and thrown open to the public on such conditions as the founders have been pleased to indicate; sometimes called patronymic libraries. Notable specimens of this class of libraries are the Astor, Cooper, and Lenox Libraries, of New York, and the Peabody Library, of Baltimore. The note of this species of library is this: it is for the use of the public entirely without cost to the public. In short, it is a library completely endowed, not only as to the original expense of its erection and equipment, but absolutely for all subsequent expense in its increase and administration. Concerning this species of library, I have this to say: It is a noble use to make of private wealth; it does immense good; but it is not the best final form of library evolution. And for two reasons: first, the man who will completely endow a free public library does not arise in every community; whereas, every community needs a free public library. And, second, the wholesomest kind of a gift is not that which does it all for the community and requires no exertion or sacrifice on their part; but that which gives the community a good generous start, but still leaves something for the community to do for itself. In other words, the healthiest sort of help, whether for one man or for ten thousand, is that help which helps a man to help himself.

And this brings us to the sixth and final form of library development. It is the one which is the resultant of the two grand ideas; primarily, the recognition of the free public library as an essential part of the system of public education and therefore as a legitimate subject for public taxation. This idea is essential to the most satisfactory form of a public library—the public must invest something in it. But this idea can adjust itself to that other noble one—private liberality in aid of the public.

And it is in this final and most consummate form, combining private help with public selfhelp, that many of the most successful libraries in this country have been organized; and yet

it is only since 1848 that such libraries have been possible. For it was in 1848 that the first state in our Union, Massachusetts, passed an act authorizing a municipality to tax itself for the support of a free public library. Since then many other states have followed with similar legislation. So that it is only within the past thirty-five years that this grand result has been reached: the systematic popularization of books under the direction of the municipality, partially at least at the public expense, and often in combination with private benefaction.

Now, it is this grand result that you have reached here in West Bay City. The library which you to-day dedicate to the perpetual service of the people, and which we may believe will continue as long as society lasts here to do its serene and beneficent work for the instruction and delight of innumerable generations of mankind—this library represents the latest, and I think we may say the most perfect and the final term in a process of library evolution, which has been going forward on this continent for more than two hundred years, and has involved, as we have seen, countless struggles and failures and sacrifices for the production of this single result.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I venture to express the hope that this study which we have now made of the process—the slow, costly, laborious process—by which this brilliant result has been made possible and easy for you, in West Bay City, is something which will enhance even your pleasure in the acquisition of this noble library as well as your appreciation of the princely act of Mr. Sage in his creative relation to it?

I trust it may enhance also your feeling of responsibility for the perpetual success of this library in the purposes for which it has been formed. This library has been well organized; but the working of it will depend upon you. It is on one side of it a business concern; and like any other business concern it will go to wrack and ruin unless it is conducted on sound business principles, accurate accounting, sharp supervision, punctuality, system, order, promptitude, energy.

But more than ordinary business qualities are needed to make this library all that it should be. Recognize the true function of the free public library; it is a part of a large system of public education. It is but a co-ordinate department of that larger institution for public education—the people's university—

including the ward schools and the high schools. Some of the fruitfulest and best work of those schools will be done in this library.

Then, too, the public library stands for the wholesome truth that education is never finished and should not stop when one stops going to school. The boy and the girl who graduate at the school do not desert the library; they keep up and carry forward their intellectual training by a post-graduate course in the public library, for the rest of their lives.

Furthermore, the free public library supplements the work of the free public schools by reaching those whom the schools never reached at all, or only reached very slightly.

And that public library is never a complete success, in which is not present in the officers a spirit of courtesy toward readers, of sympathy, of cheerfulness, of patience, even of helpfulness. Don't permit your library ever to be a dismal, bibliographical cave, in charge of a dragon. Let it always be a bright and winsome place, hospitable to all orderly people; a place where even those ill-informed about books will not be made embarrassed, but encouraged. Let it be one of the most attractive places in town; let it outshine in attractiveness the vulgar and harmful attractions of the bar-room and the gambling den; let it grow up into the best life of the community, a place resorted to by all, loved by all, a blessing to all.

## THE LIBRARY AS A FIELD FOR PHILANTHROPY

At a dinner given to Andrew Carnegie by the Authors' League in New York, he said: "They say I am a philanthropist. I am no such foolish fellow." Nevertheless, to the *North American Review* for December, 1889, he contributed an article, entitled "The Best Fields for Philanthropy," in which he gives the Library first place. It is of course impossible to tell whether the title was his or a suggestion of the editor. The extract printed here is interesting as embodying Mr. Carnegie's gospel of "help by self-help," but also as giving credit to Enoch Pratt of Baltimore as an earlier exponent of it.

Andrew Carnegie was born in Dunfermline, Scotland, Nov. 25, 1835. He was brought by his family to Pittsburgh, Pa. as a boy of 13, and after working as a weaver's assistant and a telegraph messenger boy, became an operator, rose to be head of his division, made money by organizing a sleeping-car company and after the Civil War became an ironmaster, retiring in 1901 as a multi-millionaire. Much of his fortune he gave to build libraries, almost always on the condition that the municipality should assure them a stated support. He died in New York, Aug. 11, 1919.

The reception given to the first paper<sup>1</sup> upon this subject, to which our lamented friend, the late editor and proprietor of this *Review*, was pleased to give the first place in the June number, has been most encouraging to its author, as it would

<sup>1</sup> "Wealth" by Andrew Carnegie. In the *North American Review*, June, 1889.

surely have been to the editor had he been spared, for he was most deeply interested in the subject.

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Before entering upon the question which you have proposed, it may be advantageous to restate the positions taken in the former paper, for the benefit of those who may not have read it, or who cannot conveniently refer to it. It was assumed that the present laws of competition, accumulation, and distribution are the best obtainable conditions; that through these the race receives its most valuable fruits; and, therefore, that they should be accepted and upheld. Under these it was held that great wealth must inevitably flow into the hands of the few exceptional managers of men. The question then arose, What should these do with their surplus wealth? and the "Gospel of Wealth" contended that surplus wealth should be considered as a sacred trust, to be administered during the lives of its owners, by them as trustees, for the best good of the community in which and from which it had been acquired.

It was pointed out that there were but three modes of disposing of surplus wealth, and two of these were held to be improper. First, it was held that to leave great fortunes to children did not prove true affection for them or interest in their genuine good, regarded either as individuals or as members of the state; that it was not the welfare of the children, but the pride of the parents, which inspired enormous legacies, and that, looking to the usual results of vast sums conferred upon children, the thoughtful man must be forced to say, if the good of the child only were considered: "I would as soon leave to my son a curse as to leave to him the almighty dollar."

The second mode open to men is to hoard their surplus wealth during life, and leave it at death for public uses. It was pointed out that in many cases these bequests become merely monuments of the testators' folly; that the amount of real good done by posthumous gifts was ridiculously disproportionate to the sums thus left. The recent decision upon Mr. Tilden's will, which is said to have been drawn by the ablest of lawyers, and the partial failure of Mr. Williamson's purposes in regard to the great technical school which that

millionaire intended to establish in Philadelphia, are lessons indeed for the rich who only bequeath.

The aim of the first article was thus to lead up to the conclusion that there is but one right mode of using enormous fortunes—namely, that the possessors from time to time during their own lives so administer them as to promote the permanent good of the communities from which they have been gathered. It was held that public sentiment would soon say of one who died possessed of millions of available wealth which he might have administered: "The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced."

The purpose of this article is to present some of the best methods of performing this duty of administering surplus wealth for the good of the people. The first requisite for a really good use of wealth by the millionaire who has accepted the gospel which proclaims him only a trustee of the surplus that comes to him, is to take care that the purpose for which he spends it shall not have a degrading, pauperizing tendency upon its recipients, and that his trust should be so administered as to stimulate the best and most aspiring poor of the community to further efforts for their own improvement. It is not the irreclaimably destitute, shiftless, and worthless that it is truly beneficial or truly benevolent to attempt to reach and improve. For these there exists the refuge provided by the city or the state, where they can be sheltered, fed, clothed, and kept in comfortable existence, and—most important of all—where they can be isolated from the well-doing and industrious poor, who are liable to be demoralized by contact with these unfortunates. One man or woman who succeeds in living comfortably by begging is more dangerous to society, and a greater obstacle to the progress of humanity, than a score of wordy Socialists. The individual administrator of surplus wealth has as his charge the industrious and ambitious; not those who need everything done for them, but those who, being most anxious and able to help themselves, deserve and will be benefited by help from others and the extension of their opportunities at the hands of the philanthropic rich.

It is ever to be remembered that one of the chief obstacles which the philanthropist meets in his efforts to do real and



permanent good in this world is the practice of indiscriminate giving; and the duty of the millionaire is to resolve to cease giving to objects that are not proved clearly to his satisfaction to be deserving. He must remember Mr. Rice's belief, that nine hundred and fifty out of every thousand dollars bestowed to-day upon so-called charity had better be thrown into the sea. As far as my experience of the wealthy extends, it is unnecessary to urge them to give of their superabundance in charity so-called. Greater good for the race is to be achieved by inducing them to cease impulsive and injurious giving. As a rule, the sins of millionaires in this respect are not those of omission, but of commission, because they will not take time to think, and chiefly because it is much easier to give than to refuse. Those who have surplus wealth give millions every year which produce more evil than good, and which really retard the progress of the people, because most of the forms in vogue to-day for benefiting mankind only tend to spread among the poor a spirit of dependence upon alms, when what is essential for progress is that they should be inspired to depend upon their own exertions. The miser millionaire who hoards his wealth does less injury to society than the careless millionaire who squanders his unwisely, even if he does so under cover of the mantle of sacred charity. The man who gives to the individual beggar commits a grave offence, but there are many societies and institutions soliciting alms which it is none the less injurious to the community to aid. These are as corrupting as individual beggars. Plutarch's "Morals" contains this lesson: "A beggar asking an alms of a Lacedaemonian, he said: 'Well, should I give thee anything, thou wilt be the greater beggar, for he that first gave thee money made thee idle, and is the cause of this base and dishonorable way of living.'" As I know them, there are few millionaires, very few indeed, who are clear of this sin of having made beggars.

Bearing in mind these considerations, let us endeavor to present some of the best uses to which a millionaire can devote the surplus of which he should regard himself as only the trustee.

*First*—Standing apart by itself there is the founding of a university by men enormously rich, such men as must necessarily be few in any country. Perhaps the greatest sum ever



given by an individual for any purpose is the gift of Senator Stanford, who undertakes to establish upon the Pacific coast, where he amassed his enormous fortune, a complete university, which is said to involve the expenditure of ten millions of dollars, and upon which he may be expected to bestow twenty millions of his surplus. He is to be envied. A thousand years hence some orator, speaking his praise upon the then crowded shores of the Pacific, may repeat Griffith's eulogy of Wolsey, "In bestowing he was most princely: ever witness for him this great seat of learning." Here is a noble use of wealth.

We have many such institutions, Hopkins, Cornell, Packer, and others, but most of these have only been bequeathed, and it is impossible to extol any man greatly for simply leaving what he cannot take with him. Cooper, and Pratt, and Stanford, and others of this class deserve credit and the admiration of their fellows as much for the time and the attention given during their lives, as for their expenditure, upon their respective monuments.

We cannot have the Pacific coast in mind without recalling another important work of a different character which has recently been established there, the Lick Observatory. If any millionaire be interested in the ennobling study of astronomy,—and there should be and would be such if they but gave the subject the slightest attention,—here is an example which could well be followed, for the progress made in astronomical instruments and appliances is so great and continuous that every few years a new telescope might be judiciously given to one of the observatories upon this continent, the last being always the largest and the best, and certain to carry further and further the knowledge of the universe and of our relation to it here upon the earth. As one among many of the good deeds of the late Mr. Thaw, of Pittsburg, his constant support of the observatory there may be mentioned. This observatory enabled Professor Langley to make his wonderful discoveries. The professor is now at the head of the Smithsonian Institution, a worthy successor to Professor Henry. Connected with him was Mr. Brashear, of Pittsburg, whose instruments are in most of the principal observatories of the world. He was a common millwright, but Mr. Thaw recognized his genius and

was his main support through trying days. This common workman has been made a professor by one of the foremost scientific bodies of the world. In applying part of his surplus in aiding these two now famous men, the millionaire Thaw did a noble work. Their joint labors have brought great, and are destined to bring still greater, credit upon their country in every scientific centre throughout the world.

It is reserved for very few to found universities, and, indeed, the use for many, or perhaps any, new universities does not exist. More good is henceforth to be accomplished by adding to and extending those in existence. But in this department a wide field remains for the millionaire as distinguished from the Croesus among millionaires. The gifts to Yale University have been many, but there is plenty of room for others. The School of Fine Arts, founded by Mr. Street, the Sheffield Scientific School, endowed by Mr. Sheffield, and Professor Loomis's fund for the observatory, are fine examples. Mrs. C. J. Osborne's building for reading and recitation to be regarded with especial pleasure as being the wise gift of a woman. Harvard University has not been forgotten; the Peabody Museum, and the halls of Wells, Matthews, and Thayer may be cited. Sever Hall is worthy of special mention, as showing what a genius like Richardson could do with the small sum of a hundred thousand dollars. The Vanderbilt University at Nashville, Tennessee, may be mentioned as a true product of the gospel of wealth. It was established by members of the Vanderbilt family during their lives—mark this vital feature—during their lives; for nothing counts for much that is left by a man at his death. Such funds are torn from him, not given by him. If any millionaire is at a loss to know how to accomplish great and indisputable good with his surplus, here is a field which can never be fully occupied, for the wants of our universities increase with the development of the country.

*Second*—The result of my own study of the question, What is the best gift which can be given to a community? is that a free library occupies the first place, provided the community will accept and maintain it as a public institution, as much a part of the city property as its public schools, and, indeed, an adjunct to these. It is, no doubt, possible that my

own personal experience may have led me to value a free library beyond all other forms of beneficence. When I was a boy in Pittsburg, Colonel Anderson, of Allegheny,—a name I can never speak without feelings of devotional gratitude,—opened his little library of four hundred books to boys. Every Saturday afternoon he was in attendance himself at his house to exchange books. No one but he who has felt it can know the intense longing with which the arrival of Saturday was awaited, that a new book might be had. My brother and Mr. Phipps, who have been my principal business partners through life, shared with me Colonel Anderson's precious generosity, and it was when revelling in these treasures that I resolved, if ever wealth came to me, that it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities similar to those for which we were indebted to that noble man.

Great Britain has been foremost in appreciating the value of free libraries for its people. Parliament passed an act permitting towns and cities to establish and maintain these as municipal institutions, and whenever the people of any town or city voted to accept the provisions of the act, the authorities were authorized to tax the community to the extent of one penny in the pound valuation. Most of the towns already have free libraries under this act. Many of these are the gifts of rich men, whose funds have been used for the building, and in some cases for the books also, the communities being required to maintain and to develop the libraries; and to this feature I attribute most of their usefulness. An endowed institution is liable to become the prey of a clique. The public ceases to take interest in it, or, rather, never acquires interest in it. The rule has been violated which requires the recipients to help themselves. Everything has been done for the community instead of its being only helped to help itself.

Many free libraries have been established in our country, but none that I know of with such wisdom as the Pratt Library, of Baltimore. Mr. Pratt presented to the city of Baltimore one million dollars, requiring it to pay 5 per cent. per annum, amounting to fifty thousand dollars per year, which is to be devoted to the maintenance and development of the library and its branches. During the last year 430,217 books

were distributed; 37,196 people of Baltimore are registered upon the books as readers; and it is safe to say that 37,000 frequenters of the Pratt Library are of more value to Baltimore, to the State, and to the country than all the inert, lazy, and hopelessly-poor in the whole nation. And it may further be safely said that, by placing within the reach of 37,000 aspiring people books which they were anxious to obtain, Mr. Pratt has done more for the genuine progress of the people than has been done by all the contributions of all the millionaires and rich people to help those who cannot help themselves. The one wise administrator of his surplus has poured his fertilizing stream upon soil that was ready to receive it and return a hundred-fold. The many squanderers have not only poured their streams into sieves which never can be filled,—they have done worse; they have poured them into stagnant sewers that breed the diseases which afflict the body politic. And this is not all. The million dollars of which Mr. Pratt has made so grand a use are something, but there is something greater still. When the fifth branch library was opened in Baltimore, the speaker said:

“Whatever may have been done in these four years, it was his pleasure to acknowledge that much, very much, was due to the earnest interest, the wise councils, and the practical suggestions of Mr. Pratt. He never seemed to feel that the mere donation of great wealth for the benefit of his fellow-citizens was all that would be asked of him, but he wisely labored to make its application as comprehensive and effective as possible. Thus he constantly lightened burdens that were, at times, very heavy, brought good cheer and bright sunshine when clouds flitted across the sky, and made every officer and employee feel that good work was appreciated, and loyal devotion to duty would receive hearty commendation.”

This is the finest picture I have ever seen of any of the millionaire class. As here depicted, Mr. Pratt is the ideal disciple of the “Gospel of Wealth.” We need have no fear that the mass of toilers will fail to recognize in such as he their best leaders and their most invaluable allies; for the problem of poverty and wealth, of employer and employed, will be practically solved whenever the time of the few is given, and their wealth is administered during their lives, for the best good of that portion of the community which has not been burdened by the responsibilities which attend the possession of wealth. We shall have no antagonism between classes when

that day comes, for the high and the low, the rich and the poor, shall then indeed be brothers.

No millionaire will go far wrong in his search for one of the best forms for the use of his surplus who chooses to establish a free library in any community that is willing to maintain and develop it. John Bright's words should ring in his ear: "It is impossible for any man to bestow a greater benefit upon a young man than to give him access to books in a free library." Closely allied to the library, and, where possible, attached to it, there should be rooms for an art gallery and museum, and a hall for such lectures and instruction as are provided in the Cooper Union. The traveller upon the Continent is surprised to find that every town of importance has its art gallery and museum; these may be large or small, but in any case each has a receptacle for the treasures of the locality, which is constantly receiving valuable gifts and bequests. The free library and art gallery of Birmingham are remarkable among these, and every now and then a rich man adds to their value by presenting books, fine pictures, or other works of art. All that our cities require to begin with is a proper fireproof building. Their citizens who travel will send to it rare and costly things from every quarter of the globe they visit, while those who remain at home will give or bequeath to it of their treasures. In this way these collections will grow until our cities will ultimately be able to boast of permanent exhibitions from which their own citizens will derive incalculable benefit, and which they will be proud to show to visitors. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in this city we have made an excellent beginning. Here is another avenue for the proper use of surplus wealth.

*Third*—We have another most important department in which great sums can be worthily used,—the founding or extension of hospitals, medical colleges, laboratories, and other institutions connected with the alleviation of human suffering, and especially with the prevention rather than the cure of human ills. There is no danger of pauperizing a community in giving for such purposes, because such institutions relieve temporary ailments or shelter only those who are hopeless invalids. What better gift than a hospital can be given to a community that is without one?—the gift being conditioned upon its proper maintenance by the community in its corporate capacity. If hospital accommodation already exists, no better method for using surplus wealth can be found than in



making additions to it. The late Mr. Vanderbilt's gift of half a million of dollars to the medical department of Columbia College for a chemical laboratory was one of the wisest possible uses of wealth. It strikes at the prevention of disease by penetrating into its causes. Several others have established such laboratories, but the need for them is still great.

If there be a millionaire in the land who is at a loss what to do with the surplus that has been committed to him as trustee, let him investigate the good that is flowing from these chemical laboratories. No medical college is complete without its laboratory. As with universities, so with medical colleges; it is not new institutions that are required, but additional means for the more thorough equipment of those that exist. The forms that benefactions to these may wisely take are numerous, but probably none is more useful than that adopted by Mr. Osborne when he built a school for training female nurses at Bellevue College. If from all gifts there flows one-half of the good that comes from this wise use of a millionaire's surplus, the most exacting may well be satisfied. Only those who have passed through a lingering and dangerous illness can rate at their true value the care, skill, and attendance of trained female nurses. Their employment as nurses has enlarged the sphere and influence of woman. It is not to be wondered at that a Senator of the United States and a physician distinguished in this country for having received the highest distinctions abroad should find their wives from this class.

*Fourth*—In the very front rank of benefactions public parks should be placed, always provided that the community undertakes to maintain, beautify, and preserve inviolate the parks given to it. No more useful or more beautiful monument can be left by any man than a park for the city in which he was born or in which he has long lived, nor can the community pay a more graceful tribute to the citizen who presents it than to give his name to the gift. If a park be already provided, there is still room for many judicious gifts in connection with it. Mr. Phipps, of Allegheny, has given conservatories to the park there, which are visited by many every day of the week, and crowded by thousands of working people every Sunday, for, with rare wisdom, he has stipulated as a condition of the gift that the conservatories shall be open on

Sundays. The result of his experiment has been so gratifying that he is justified in adding to them from his surplus, as he is doing largely this year. To any lover of flowers among the wealthy I commend a study of what is possible for them to do in the light of Mr. Phipps's example; and may they please note that Mr. Phipps is a wise as well as a liberal giver, for he requires the city to maintain these conservatories, and thus secures for them forever the public ownership, the public interest, and the public criticism of their management. Had he undertaken to manage and maintain them, it is probable that popular interest in the gift would never have been awakened.

The parks and pleasure-grounds of small towns throughout Europe are not less surprising than their libraries, museums, and art galleries. We saw nothing more pleasing during our recent travels than the hillside of Bergen, in Norway. It has been converted into one of the most picturesque of pleasure-grounds; fountains, cascades, water-falls, delightful arbors, fine terraces, and statues adorn what was before a barren mountain side. Here is a field worthy of study by the millionaire who would confer a lasting benefit upon his fellows. Another beautiful instance of the right use of wealth in the direction of making cities more and more attractive we found in Dresden. The owner of the leading paper there bequeathed its revenues forever to the city, to be used in beautifying it. An art committee decides from time to time what new artistic feature is to be introduced or what hideous feature is to be changed, and as the revenues accrue they are expended in this direction. Thus through the gift of this patriotic newspaper proprietor his native city of Dresden is fast becoming one of the most artistic places of residence in the whole world. A work having been completed, it devolves upon the city to maintain it forever. May I be excused if I commend to our millionaire newspaper proprietors the example of their colleague in the capital of Saxony?

Scarcely a city of any magnitude in the older countries is without many structures and features of great beauty. Much has been spent upon ornament, decoration, and architectural effect: we are still far behind in these things upon this side of the Atlantic. Our Republic is great in some things,—in



material development unrivalled; but let us always remember that in art and in the finer touches we have scarcely yet taken a place. Had the exquisite memorial arch recently erected temporarily in New York been shown in Dresden, the art committee there would probably have been enabled, from the revenue of the newspaper given by its owner for just such purposes, to order its permanent erection to adorn the city forever.

While the bestowal of a park upon a community as one of the best uses for surplus wealth will be universally approved, in embracing such additions to it as conservatories, or in advocating the building of memorial arches and works of adornment, it is probable that many will think we go too far, and consider these somewhat fanciful. The material good to flow from them may not be so directly visible; but let not any practical mind, intent only upon material good, depreciate the value of wealth given for these or for kindred aesthetic purposes as being useless as far as the mass of the people and their needs are concerned. As with libraries and museums, so with these more distinctively artistic works; these perform their great use when they reach the best of the masses of the people. It is worth more to reach and touch the sentiment for beauty in the naturally bright minds of this class than that those incapable of being so touched should be pandered to. For what the improver of the race must endeavor to do is to reach those who have the divine spark ever so feebly developed, that it may be strengthened and grow. For my part, I think Mr. Phipps put his money to better use in giving the workingmen of Allegheny conservatories filled with beautiful flowers, orchids, and aquatic plants, which they, with their wives and children, can enjoy in their spare hours, and on which they can feed the love for the beautiful, than if he had given his surplus money to furnish them with bread, for those in health who cannot earn their bread are scarcely worth considering by the individual giver; the care of such being the duty of the state. The man who erects in a city a truly artistic arch, statue, or fountain makes a wise use of his surplus. "Man does not live by bread alone."

*Fifth*—We have another good use for surplus wealth, in providing for our cities halls suitable for meetings of all

kinds, especially for concerts of elevating music. Our cities are rarely provided with halls for these purposes, being in this respect also very far behind European cities. The Springer Hall, of Cincinnati, that valuable addition to the city, was largely the gift of Mr. Springer, who was not content to bequeath funds from his estate at death, but who gave during his life, and, in addition, gave—what was equally important—his time and business ability to insure the successful results which have been achieved. The gift of a hall to any city lacking one is an excellent use for surplus wealth for the good of a community. The reason why the people have only one instructive and elevating, or even amusing, entertainment when a dozen would be highly beneficial, is that the rent of a hall, even when a suitable hall exists (which is rare), is so great as to prevent managers from running the risk of financial failure. If every city in our land owned a hall which could be given or rented for a small sum for such gatherings as a committee or the mayor of the city judged advantageous, the people could be furnished with proper lectures, amusements, and concerts at an exceedingly small cost. The town halls of European cities, many of which have organs, are of inestimable value to the people, when utilized as they are in the manner suggested. Let no one underrate the influence of entertainments of an elevating or even of an amusing character, for these do much to make the lives of the people happier and their natures better. If any millionaire born in a small village, which has now become a great city, is prompted in the day of his success to do something for his birthplace with part of his surplus, his grateful remembrance cannot take a form more useful than that of a public hall with an organ, provided the city agrees to maintain and use it.

*Sixth*—In another respect we are still much behind Europe. A form of beneficence which is not uncommon there is providing swimming baths for the people. The donors of these have been wise enough to require the city benefited to maintain them at its own expense, and as proof of the contention that everything should never be done for any one or for any community, but that the recipients should invariably be called upon to do part, it is significant that it is found essential for the popular success of these healthful establishments to exact

a nominal charge for their use. In many cities, however, the school children are admitted free at fixed hours upon certain days, different hours being fixed for the boys and the girls to use the great swimming baths, hours or days being also fixed for the use of these baths by ladies. In inland cities the young of both sexes are thus taught to swim. Swimming clubs are organized, and matches are frequent, at which medals and prizes are given. The reports published by the various swimming baths throughout Great Britain are filled with instances of lives saved because those who fortunately escaped shipwreck had been taught to swim in the baths, and not a few instances are given in which the pupils of certain bathing establishments have saved the lives of others. If any disciple of the "Gospel of Wealth" gives his favorite city large swimming and private baths (provided the municipality undertakes their management as a city affair), he will never be called to account for an improper use of the funds intrusted to him.

*Seventh*—Churches as fields for the use of surplus wealth have purposely been reserved until the last, because, these being sectarian, every man will be governed by his own attachments; therefore gifts to churches, it may be said, are not, in one sense, gifts to the community at large, but to special classes. Nevertheless, every millionaire may know of a district where the little cheap, uncomfortable, and altogether unworthy wooden structure stands at the cross-roads, to which the whole neighborhood gathers on Sunday, and which is the centre of social life and source of neighborly feeling. The administrator of wealth has made a good use of part of his surplus if he replaces that building with a permanent structure of brick, stone, or granite, up the sides of which the honeysuckle and columbine may climb, and from whose tower the sweet-tolling bell may sound. The millionaire should not figure how cheaply this structure can be built, but how perfect it can be made. If he has the money, it should be made a gem, for the educating influence of a pure and noble specimen of architecture, built, as the pyramids were built, to stand for ages, is not to be measured by dollars. Every farmer's home, heart, and mind in the district will be influenced by the beauty and grandeur of the church. But having given the building, the donor should stop there; the support of the church should be upon its own people; there is not much genuine religion in the congregation

or much good to flow from the church which is not supported at home.

Many other avenues for the wise expenditure of surplus wealth might be indicated. I enumerate but a few—a very few—of the many fields which are open, and only these in which great or considerable sums can be judiciously used. It is not the privilege, however, of millionaires alone to work for or aid measures which are certain to benefit the community. Every one who has but a small surplus above his moderate wants may share this privilege with his richer brothers, and those without surplus can give at least part of their time, which is usually as important as funds, and often more so. Some day, perhaps, with your permission, I will endeavor to point out some fields and modes in which these may perform well their part as trustees of wealth, or leisure, according to the measure of their respective fortunes.

It is not expected, neither is it desirable, that there should be a general concurrence as to the best possible use of surplus wealth. For different men and different localities there are different uses. What commends itself more highly to the judgment of the administrator is the best use for him, for his heart should be in the work. It is as important in administering wealth as it is in any other branch of a man's work that he should be enthusiastically devoted to it and feel that in the field selected his work lies.

Besides this, there is room and need for all kinds of wise benefactions for the common weal. The man who builds a university, library, or laboratory performs no more useful work than he who elects to devote himself and his surplus means to the adornment of a park, the gathering together of a collection of pictures for the public, or the building of a memorial arch. These are all true laborers in the vineyard. The only point required by the "Gospel of Wealth" is that the surplus which accrues from time to time in the hands of man should be administered by him in his own lifetime for that purpose which is seen by him, as trustee, to be best for the good of the people. To leave at death what he cannot take away, and place upon others the burden of the work which it was his own duty to perform, is to do nothing worthy. This requires no sacrifice, nor any sense of duty to his fellows.

Time was when the words concerning the rich man enter-

ing heaven were regarded as a hard saying. Today, when all questions are probed to the bottom and the standards of faith received the most liberal interpretations, the startling verse has been relegated to the rear, to await the next kindly revision as one of those things which cannot be quite understood, but which meanwhile—it is carefully to be observed—are not to be understood literally. But is it so very improbable that the next stage of thought is not to restore the doctrine in all its pristine purity and force, as being in perfect harmony with sound ideas upon the subject of wealth and poverty, the rich and the poor, and the contrasts everywhere seen and deplored? In Christ's day, it is evident, reformers were against the wealthy. It is none the less evident that we are fast recurring to that position to-day; and there will be nothing to surprise the student of sociological development if society should soon approve the text which has caused so much anxiety: "It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Even if the needle were the small casement at the gates, the words betoken serious difficulty for the rich. It will be but a step for the theologian to take from the doctrine that he who dies rich dies disgraced to that which brings upon the man punishment or deprivation hereafter.

The "Gospel of Wealth" but echoes Christ's words. It calls upon the millionaire to sell all that he hath and give it in the highest and best form to the poor, by administering his estate himself for the good of his fellows, before he is called upon to lie down and rest upon the bosom of Mother Earth. So doing, he will approach his end no longer the ignoble hoarder of useless millions, poor, very poor indeed, in money, but rich, very rich, twenty times a millionaire still, in the affection, gratitude and admiration of his fellow-men, and—sweeter far—soothed and sustained by the still small voice within, which, whispering, tells him that, because he has lived, perhaps one small part of the great world has been bettered just a little. This much is sure: against such riches as these no bar will be found at the gates of Paradise.

## THE IDEA OF A POPULAR LIBRARY

The following seven papers give some fundamental ideas on the functions of popular libraries. They are arranged in chronological order, and, so grouped, span the gap between 1851 and 1906, considerably more than half a century. The first is interesting as presenting a discussion at the inception of our first great public library, that of the city of Boston, quoted from "The Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor" (Boston, 1909). Ticknor's idea of a popular library, given in a letter to Edward Everett, is followed by Everett's answer. Some of the editor's comments precede and conclude. Those interested may read on, in Chapter XV, Vol. II of the "Life," and get a further idea of Ticknor's zeal in promoting the Boston library and his interest in making it as popular as possible, in distinction to the idea of a library solely for scholars, upheld by John Jacob Astor, in his New York gift of three years previous, which Everett rather favored.

George Ticknor was born in Boston, Aug. 1, 1791 and graduated at Dartmouth in 1807. He was admitted to the bar in 1813 but devoted his life chiefly to teaching and to literature, serving as professor in Harvard in 1819-35. He died in Boston, Jan. 26, 1871. A sketch of Everett appears on page 127 of this volume.

The endowment of a great library in New York, given by Mr. John Jacob Astor, at his death, in 1848, was much talked about; and men of forecast began to say openly that, unless something of a like character were done in Boston, the scientific



and literary culture of this part of the country would follow trade and capital to the metropolis, which was thus taking the lead. Still, nothing effectual was done. Among the persons with whom Mr. Ticknor had, of late years, most frequently talked of the matter, Dr. Channing was dead, Mr. Abbott Lawrence had become Minister to England, and Mr. Jonathan Phillips was growing too infirm to take part in public affairs. The subject, however, kept its hold on Mr. Ticknor's mind.

His idea was that which he felt lay at the foundation of all our public institutions, namely, that in order to form and maintain our character as a great nation, the mass of the people must be intelligent enough to manage their own government with wisdom; and he came, though not at once, to the conclusion that a very free use of books, furnished by an institution supported at the expense of the community, would be one of the effective means for obtaining this result of general culture.

He had reached this conclusion before he saw any probability of its being practically carried out, as is proved by the following letter, which he wrote to Mr. Everett, in the summer of 1851. A few months before this date Mr. Everett had presented to the city—after offering it in vain more than once—a collection of about a thousand volumes of Public Documents, and books of similar character, accompanied by a letter, urging the establishment of a public library.

TO HON. EDWARD EVERETT.

Bellows Falls, Vermont, July 14, 1851.

MY DEAR EVERETT,—I have seen with much gratification from time to time, within the last year, and particularly in your last letter on the subject, that you interest yourself in the establishment of a public library in Boston;—I mean a library open to all the citizens, and from which all, under proper restrictions, can take out books. Such, at least, I understand to be your plan; and I have thought, more than once, that I would talk with you about it, but accident has prevented it. However, perhaps a letter is as good on all accounts, and better as a distinct memorandum of what I mean.

It has seemed to me, for many years, that such a free public library, if adapted to the wants of our people, would be the crowning glory of our public schools. But I think it important



that it should be adapted to our peculiar character; that is, that it should come in at the end of our system of free instruction, and be fitted to continue and increase the effects of that system by the self-culture that results from reading.

The great obstacle to this with us is not—as it is in Prussia and elsewhere—a low condition of the mass of the people, condemning them, as soon as they escape from school, and often before it, to such severe labor, in order to procure the coarsest means of physical subsistence, that they have no leisure for intellectual culture, and soon lose all taste for it. Our difficulty is, to furnish means specially fitted to encourage a love for reading, to create an appetite for it, which the schools often fail to do, and then to adapt these means to its gratification. That an appetite for reading can be very widely excited is plain, from what the cheap publications of the last twenty years have accomplished, gradually raising the taste from such poor trash as the novels with which they began, up to the excellent and valuable works of all sorts which now flood the country, and are read by the middling classes everywhere, and in New England, I think, even by a majority of the people.\*

Now what seems to me to be wanted in Boston is, an apparatus that shall carry this taste for reading as deep as possible into society, assuming, what I believe to be true, that it can be carried deeper in our society than in any other in the world, because we are better fitted for it. To do this I would establish a library which, in its *main* department and purpose, should differ from all free libraries yet attempted; I mean one in which any popular books, tending to moral and intellectual improvement, should be furnished in such numbers of copies that many persons, if they desired it, could be reading the same work at the same time; in short, that not only the best books of all sorts, but the pleasant literature of the day, should be made accessible to the whole people at the only time when they care for it, *i.e.* when it is fresh and new. I would, therefore, continue to buy additional copies of any book of this class,

\* Mr. Ticknor was much struck by the publication of a cheap edition of Johns' Translation of Froissart, by the Harpers, of which he found a copy in a small inn of a retired village of southern New York, in 1844; and he always watched the signs of popular taste, both in publishers' lists and in the bookshelves of the houses which he entered, in his summer journeys, or in his errands of business and charity in the winter.

almost as long as they should continue to be asked for, and thus, by following the popular taste,—unless it should demand something injurious,—create a real appetite for healthy general reading. This appetite, once formed, will take care of itself. It will, in the great majority of cases, demand better and better books; and can, I believe, by a little judicious help, rather than by any direct control or restraint, be carried much higher than is generally thought possible.

After some details, of no present consequence, developing this idea, the letter goes on:—

Nor would I, on this plan, neglect the establishment of a department for consultation, and for all the common purposes of public libraries, some of whose books, like encyclopaedias and dictionaries, should never be lent out, while others could be permitted to circulate; all on the shelves being accessible for reference as many hours in the day as possible, and always in the evening. This part of the library, I should hope, would be much increased by donations from public-spirited individuals, and individuals interested in the progress of knowledge, while, I think, the public treasury should provide for the more popular department.

Intimations of the want of such public facilities for reading are, I think, beginning to be given. In London I notice advertisements of some of the larger circulating libraries, that they purchase one and two hundred copies of all new and popular works; and in Boston, I am told, some of our own circulating libraries will purchase almost any new book, if the person asking for it will agree to pay double the usual fee for reading it; while in all, I think, several, and sometimes many copies of new and popular works are kept on hand for a time, and then sold, as the demand for them dies away.

Omitting other details, now of no importance, the letter ends as follows:—

Several years ago I proposed to Mr. Abbott Lawrence to move in favor of such a library in Boston; and, since that time, I have occasionally suggested it to other persons. In every case the idea has been well received; and the more I have thought of it and talked about it, the more I have been persuaded, that it is a plan easy to be reduced to practice, and one that would be followed by valuable results.

I wish, therefore, that you would consider it, and see what objections there are to it. I have no purpose to do anything more about it myself than to write you this letter, and continue to speak of it, as I have done heretofore, to persons who, like yourself, are interested in such matters. But I should be well pleased to know how it strikes you.

To this letter Mr. Everett replied as follows:—

. CAMBRIDGE, July 26, 1851.

MY DEAR TICKNOR,—I duly received your letter of the 14th from Bellows Falls, and read it with great interest.

The extensive circulation of new and popular works is a feature of a public library which I have not hitherto much contemplated. It deserves to be well weighed, and I shall be happy hereafter to confer with you on the subject. I cannot deny that my views have, since my younger days, undergone some change as to the practicability of freely loaning books at home from large public libraries. Those who have been connected with the administration of such libraries are apt to get discouraged, by the loss and damage resulting from the loan of books. My present impressions are in favor of making the amplest provision in the library for the use of books there.

Your plan, however, is intended to apply only to a particular class of books, and does not contemplate the unrestrained circulation of those of which the loss could not be easily replaced.

That Boston must have a great public library, or yield to New York in letters as well as in commerce, will, I think, be made quite apparent in a few years. But on this and other similar subjects I hope to have many opportunities of conferring with you next winter.

The difference of opinion, here made evident, as to the possibility or safety of allowing books to circulate freely, was not removed by many subsequent conversations, nor were the hopes of either of the gentlemen, with regard to the establishment of a great library, raised even when, in the early part of 1852, the mayor, Mr. Seaver, recommended that steps be taken for such an object, and the Common Council, presided over by Mr. James Lawrence, proposed that a board of trustees for such an institution should be appointed. When, therefore, both Mr. Everett and Mr. Ticknor—the latter greatly to his surprise—were

invited to become members of this board, they conferred together anew on the project; and, although the mayor, on hearing Mr. Ticknor's views, was much pleased with them, and urged him to take the place, yet he at one time determined to decline the office, certainly unless the library were to be open for the free circulation of most of its books, and unless it were to be dedicated, in the first instance, rather to satisfying the wants of the less favored classes of the community, than—like all public libraries then in existence—to satisfying the wants of scholars, men of science, and cultivated men generally.

## THE FUNCTION OF A TOWN LIBRARY

Nearly a quarter-century elapsed after Ticknor's letter, just quoted, before the publication in book form of Josiah P. Quincy's "Protection of Majorities and Other Essays" (Boston, 1875), of which collection his paper on the function of a town library forms a part. As stated in his introduction, it appeared originally in *Old and New*, a magazine already extinct when that introduction was penned.

While asserting as strongly as Mr. Ticknor his belief in making a library "popular," the writer denies that his belief justifies the inclusion of fiction. His position seems to be that, praiseworthy as much of it is, fiction should not be supplied to the public from the public funds. The present attitude, that this is a matter to be settled by the public itself, is repudiated in set terms and with somewhat picturesque illustrations, by Mr. Quincy. His stalwart advocacy of the library as a supplement to the school is what justifies the inclusion of his paper in this collection. Those who desire to follow Mr. Quincy a little farther may read the next paper in the above-named collection entitled "The Abuse of Reading."

Josiah Phillips Quincy was born in Boston, Nov. 28, 1829 and graduated at Harvard in 1850, the son of the statesman Josiah Quincy who was also president of Harvard. He was admitted to the bar in 1854, but afterward engaged in business and in farming, also writing freely on civic and economic subjects.

This is a one-sided paper. Something might be said on the other side; but, as that is the popular side, it is likely to receive full justice. In behalf of an unconverted minority, who should be represented through the press, if nowhere else, I desire to register a dissent from the prevailing opinion concerning the function of libraries sustained by the taxation of towns and small municipalities. The importance of stimulating thought upon subjects bearing ever so remotely upon our fiscal requirements, I conceive to be far greater than may superficially appear. For when the mass of our people clearly comprehend what government should not be called upon to do for them, they will insist upon its performing duties which are manifestly within its sphere of action. Laboring men and women are to-day suffering from the adulteration of their food and drink, and from a system of taxation which oppresses them with weighty and unjust burdens. Their deliverance can only come by dismissing legislators who are disciples of what may be called the Todgers school of economy; that remarkable matron, as Dickens tells us, caring little for the solid sustenance of her boarders, provided "the gravy" was abundant and satisfactory.

Upon what principle can the citizen, who thinks before he casts his ballot, justify himself in voting increased taxes upon his neighbors for the purpose of establishing a library? He must assume the necessity of public schools, and then argue that he may vote for a library that will supplement the elementary instruction which the town provides. And the justification is ample. If our schools are so conducted as to awaken a taste for knowledge and give a correct method in English reading, the town library may represent the university brought to every man's door. But suppose a large portion of the funds taken from tax-payers is devoted to circulating ephemeral works of mere amusement. Is it not as monstrous for me to vote to tax my neighbor to furnish the boys and girls with "A Terrible Tribulation," or "Lady So-and-So's Struggle," as it would be for the purpose of providing them with free tickets to witness "Article 47" or "The Black Crook"? These romances and dramas (to represent them in the most favorable point of view) are evanescent productions, designed to meet the market demand for the intense and spasmodic. Their claims to patronage from the public purse are precisely similar.



So far, the citizen has a right to object as a tax-payer. But, if he were truly solicitous for the welfare of the community about him, the protest might be far deeper. For the weak spot in our school system lies just here: while claiming immense credit for giving most of our children the ability to read, we show the profoundest indifference about what they read. But this accomplishment of reading is a very doubtful good if it goes no farther than to give a boy the satisfaction of perusing "The Police Gazette," or introduces a girl to the immoralities of Mr. Griffith Gaunt, and the adventures of a hundred other heroes of characters even more questionable. By teaching our children to read, and then setting them adrift in a sea of feverish literature which vitiates the taste and enervates the character, we show an indifference about as sensible as that of the old lady who thought it could not matter whether her son had gone to the bosom of Abraham or Beelzebub, seeing that they were both Scripture names.

It is not difficult to conceive of communities, existing in Greenland or elsewhere, which might legitimately tax the citizen to furnish his neighbors with their novel-reading. But it can scarcely be disputed that an increased facility for obtaining works of fiction is not the pressing need of our country in this present year of grace. Dr. Isaac Ray, perhaps our highest authority on morbid mental phenomena, concludes his study on the effects of the prevalent romantic literature in these words: "The specific doctrine I would inculcate is, that the excessive indulgence in novel-reading, which is a characteristic of our times, is chargeable with many of the mental irregularities that prevail among us in a degree unknown at any former period." The late Dr. Forbes Winslow, a physician of similar note in England, used still stronger language in describing how fearfully and fatally suggestive to the minds of the young are those artistically developed records of sin which form the staple of the popular novel. In these days of disordered nerve centres, and commissions to inquire into every thing, we neglect much valuable information which lies upon the surface. It is well to bear in mind that our eminent bibliographer, Mr. Spofford, has informed us that "masses of novels and other ephemeral publications overload most of our popular libraries"; and that our wisest physicians have agreed as to the influence they exert

Of course these views will be met by a brusque statement that town libraries must supply such books as people want, and that they demand the current novels in unlimited quantities. But I repudiate the dismal fallacy upon which such an argument is based. Plum-cake and champagne would doubtless be demanded at a Sunday-school picnic, were these delicacies placed upon the table; but, if the committee did not think it necessary to supply them from the parish funds, is it certain that a fair amount of cold beef and hasty-pudding would not be consumed in their stead? And if a heartless man-government declined to furnish Maggie and Mollie with "The Pirate's Penance" or "The Bride's Bigamy" for their Sabbath reading, is it not possible that those fair voters of the future might substitute Mrs. Fawcett's interesting illustrations of political economy, or some outline of human physiology, their knowledge of which would bless an unborn generation?

I do not advocate the absurdity of a town library which should chiefly consist of authors like Plato and Professor Peirce. No one can doubt that the great majority of its volumes should be emphatically *popular* in their character. They should furnish intelligible and interesting reading to the average graduate of the town schools. And there is no lack of such works. The outlines of physical and social science have been written by men of genius in simple and attractive style. History and biography in the hands of their masters give a healthy stimulus to the imagination, and tend to strengthen the character. The function of a town library should be to supply reading improving and interesting, and yet, in the best sense of the word, popular; and I maintain that this can be done, without setting up a rival agency to the news-stand, the book-club, and the weekly paper, for the circulation of the novels of the day.

There is a saying of Dr. Johnson, to the effect, that, if a boy be let loose in a library, he is likely to give himself a very fair education. But, in accepting this dictum, we must remember the sort of library the doctor had in his mind. As known to him, it was based upon solid volumes of systematized information. Besides these were the noblest poems of the world, a very few great romances, and ponderous tomes of controversial theology; good, healthy food, and much of it attractive to an unpampered boy-appetite.

But the range of a large library is by no means necessary to produce the soundest educational results. Can it be doubted that familiar knowledge of a small case of well-selected books—such, for instance, as the modest stipend of a country clergyman easily collects—is better for boy and girl than the liberty of devouring a thousand highly-flavored sweets in the free library? At all events, a few old-fashioned people do not question it. "A year ago," writes one of them, "Alice used to read Irving and Spenser, and Tom was dipping into Gibbon and Shakespeare; liking them well enough, yet preferring a game of base-ball to either, as it was proper he should. But the town library was opened, and these young people are found crouching over novels in out-of-the-way corners, when they ought to be at play; or reading surreptitiously at night, when they ought to be asleep." It is in vain to throw all the responsibility upon parents. American parents are very busy, and somewhat careless. Mrs. Fanny Firefly's highly-seasoned love-stories for girls, and Mr. Samuel Sensation's boy-novels and spiced preparations of boned history, are got up, like the port-wine drops of the confectioners, to tempt and to sell. And they do their work. No one can examine the average boy and girl of the period without being struck with their ignorance of the great works of English literature which young people of a former generation were accustomed to read with profit and delight.

The function of a town library is to supplement the town schools; to gratify the taste for knowledge which they should have imparted; and to serve as an instrument for that self-education to which there is no limit. But tax-payers are not bound to circulate twenty-seven thousand novels against nineteen hundred volumes of biography and seventeen hundred of history, according to the figures of one report; or to expend two-thirds of the working force of their establishment in sending out "novels and juveniles," according to the statement of another. In a word, information, not excitement, should be imbibed from the atmosphere of the town library. That prevailing infirmity of our time which seems to substitute sensibility for morality should there find small encouragement. But we shall never know what this institution might do for a community, so long as the temptation of free novels is thrust in the faces of all who enter. For it is not to be expected that our youth fresh

from school, moving among the countless agitations of American life, will select reading that may require some mental exertion, so long as mental excitement is offered them in unlimited amounts.

I am well aware how much may be said for the story-tellers, and how many people there are to say it; and, whenever there is danger of their being unduly neglected, my voice shall be loudly raised in their behalf. But one may allow the claims of the romances, from Scheherazade to Mrs. Southworth, and yet maintain that the theory upon which the average town library is run is faulty. There is no virtue in despising cakes and ale, and the heat of ginger in the mouth may at times impart a wholesome glow to the entire system. But it does not quite follow that it is the function of American towns to supply these stimulants gratis, at the expense of their tax-payers. While we consider the immense amount of reading of a certain sort that a town library supplies, it is well to remember that there are other sorts of reading it may possibly prevent. For it may encourage reading precisely as prodigality encourages industry. Luxury and profusion do indeed feed industry, and demoralize it; but the industry which serves God by blessing man, they prevent from being fed. I fear that in these days more noble capacities die of a surfeit from too much poor reading, than starve from want of good books. The valid defence of institutions working in the interest of State education is this: they prevent a waste of power. When any one of them can be shown to encourage waste of power, it needs looking after. In our complex social condition, the real consequences of any government interference extend far beyond its apparent consequences. An institution may be very useful up to a certain point, and yet hurtful if allowed to run its full course without restraining criticism.

The managers of our smaller libraries are apt to be picked men, who give unrequited labor and intelligence to their trust. But they are chosen at town meetings, and to a certain extent must carry out the wishes of their electors. Upon this matter, as upon most others, it is the duty of the thoughtful men and women to create a wholesome public opinion. They must recognize the fact that the change from a few good books to an un-

limited supply of all sorts of books is by no means an unmixed advantage to a community. While the results of town libraries, taken in the aggregate, are undoubtedly good, it is our duty to consider whether they ought not to be better.





## THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The public library had now passed the period of the merely academic advocacy exemplified in the Ticknor letter of 1851. It was an actual, functioning institution, and as such was called upon to answer criticism and to justify its existence. The atmosphere of apologetics begins to appear in what its friends have to say about it. This is evident in the extract from Col. Higginson's "Men and Women" (New York, 1888) which immediately follows. The author's comparison of the evolution of a library with that of a great railroad system is perhaps the first hint of a comprehensive vision of the library as something bigger than any individual town or city institution and beyond it.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson was born in Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 22, 1823, and graduated at Harvard in 1841. He entered the ministry in 1847 but retired in 1858 and served in the Civil War. From that time until his death, May 9, 1911, he devoted himself to literature, publishing a large number of books.

Just as there is a good deal of anxiety wasted in regard to our free public schools, especially on the part of those who have never entered them, so there is some misplaced solicitude in regard to our libraries. The free town or city library is one of the few things in our democratic society that would have pleased the splenetic Carlyle, who mourned in one of his early letters that every village in England had its jail, but none its open library. It is a pity, therefore, when a man of high standing and great influence writes of these institutions thus hastily (I take the passage from a well-known literary journal): "Among the forms of beneficence for which our own

generation has been conspicuous is the Free Library. . . But it is, I apprehend, no exaggeration to say that such well-meant generosity has *oftener than otherwise* (the italics are my own) been chilled and discouraged by its results. Appreciative readers are few, the best books are largely let alone, and the cost of the 'plant' and the taste which are put into it are often in most painful contrast to the appreciation which they have received." Now, while every count of this last sentence may be true indictment, it is easy to show how little it sustains the verdict. "Appreciative readers" are few in the most cultivated circles, if their appreciation must be tested by "the best books" only. It is not easy even to know what the best books are, if we may judge by the tiresome failures in making out the list of them; and suppose that they were known, do we find many clergymen or bishops who habitually read Plato, Æschylus, and Dante, rather than "Ben-Hur" or "The lady or the tiger"? It does not therefore follow that people are unworthy of public libraries because "the best books are largely let alone"; the question is whether even the second best may not be good reading. We have the medical authority of Hippocrates for saying that the second best medicine may be better than the best, if the patient likes it best. So in regard to the fine buildings, the success of republican government happily does not depend on how far our citizens appreciate the architecture of the Capitol at Washington and the State House at Albany; and it is surely the same with libraries. Grant a few over-fine library buildings, built to please some private benefactor; grant a few mismanaged public libraries—though where these buildings or these libraries are I do not myself know—does the kindly writer of these lines mean to be understood as saying that "oftener than otherwise" our free public libraries are failures?

If he does, it can only be said that this remark adds another to the innumerable illustrations of that invaluable remark of Coleridge that we must take every man's testimony to the value of that which he does not know. All experience shows how easy it is to construct an institution out of one's own consciousness and then condemn it; we see this daily in what is written of our public school system. In General Butler's brief career as Governor of Massachusetts he made a

severe attack upon the Normal Art School in Boston, and cited a pathetic instance of a fallen girl who undoubtedly (as he urged) received her first demoralization from the study of the nude in that school. It turned out on investigation that he himself had never entered the school, and that the young girl herself made no such charges; that there never had been any studying from nude models in the school; that she had attended it but a month or two, and this in its early days, when it did not possess so much as a plaster cast of a human foot or hand. No matter; the charge was reiterated up to the very end of His Excellency's career in office, and is believed by many worthy people of this day. It is equally easy to bring general charges against public libraries, and equally hard to remove their impression, however unjust and even cruel they may be.

What are the facts? There has just been a great Librarians' Convention assembled from all parts of the country, and keeping together for many days. Did a single speaker at that Convention take the ground that "oftener than otherwise" the benefactors of public libraries were chilled and discouraged? On the contrary, it was reported that such benefactors were never so active, and their benefactions were never so large. The tone was not one of discouragement, but of buoyancy and hope. Every one admitted the vastness of the educational engine created by the free library system; every one had his own suggestion by way of improvement or development, but every one expressed a cordial faith in the community, and reported encouragement in all work well done. The simple truth is that the creation of a system of such libraries is like the creation of a great railway system; it must be an evolution, not a creation outright. The wisest librarian in America fifty years ago had no more conception of the free library system of to-day than had Benjamin Franklin of our postal methods; nor can any one now foresee what fifty years of development will do for either.

The truth is that every step in any great organization brings out new possibilities, new dangers, and new resources. Side by side with the perils of free libraries—as of too much light reading, and the absence of proper appreciation of the best things—there are evoked resources to meet these dangers.

Outside the library there come up the "association to promote study at home," and the vast Chautauqua "reading circles"—all these being essentially based on the free library system, and implying it for their full development. Inside the library there grow up such methods as those of Mr. S. S. Green, City Librarian of Worcester, Massachusetts, whose ways of making such an institution useful to all sorts and conditions of the people may take rank with Rowland Hill's improvements in postal service, as to their results on democratic civilization. He has succeeded in linking the library and the public schools so closely that he and the teachers acting in concurrence, indirectly control the reading of the whole generation that is growing up in that city. The details must be sought in his reports—as, for instance, one from the *Library Journal* of March, 1887, which is printed as a leaflet; but the essential thing in managing libraries, as in managing schools, is to have faith in the community in which one lives, and to believe that people do, as the Scripture has it, "covet earnestly the best gifts," if you will only show them how those best gifts are to be obtained. Put into school and library methods one-half the organizing ability brought to bear on railways and telegraphs, and we shall stand astonished at the results within our reach. Those already attained, if fairly looked at, are sufficient to encourage any one. The writer has at two different times and in two different States been a director in these institutions. Whenever he needed a little stimulus toward doing his duty it was his custom to go and look over the rack containing the books lately brought back by readers. With all necessary deduction for the love of fiction—a love shared in these days by the wisest and best—the proportion of sensible and useful reading was always such as to vindicate the immense value of the free public libraries.

## TWO FUNDAMENTALS

Mary Salome Cutler, now Mrs. Milton Fairchild, is the first librarian to be quoted in this symposium. A sketch of her appears in Vol. II. of this series. In the paragraphs quoted below which form part of a paper read by Miss Cutler, then vice-director of the New York State Library School, before the Pennsylvania Library Club and printed in *The Library Journal* (October, 1896), appears a definite recognition of the social character of the library's task. Her two fundamentals—organization and human feelings—are both decided elements in its socialization.

In considering library interests we do well, I think, not to confine ourselves to the limited range of library subjects.

That mysterious thing which we call society is growing more complex, every part more curiously intertwined with every other part, each human life bearing some relation to every other human life. Whether he will or no, it is literally true that "no man liveth to himself alone." If it were possible, then, as a part of this organism to discover some of the laws which govern the whole, we might come back to our special domain with an application of the laws which would have the force of freshness. I believe that we gain an insight into these controlling principles only by yielding to the tendency of solidarity, by opening ourselves to surrounding influences, by living the fullest life of which we are capable. I think I have seen the workings of two of these laws which have a close relation to each other. If I am right your experience will confirm mine, and we can together make the application to what concerns us most—the library interests of to-day.

In any undertaking results depend directly, and often largely, upon the perfection of organization. Organization implies a

mind which can grasp the undertaking as a whole, follow it out, each step in detail, estimate the various factors, personal and impersonal, provide for unforeseen contingencies, and furnish the faith, the will-power, the personal magnetism, whatever you choose to call it, in such measure as is needed to carry it through. Such a mind sees the end at the beginning, and thinks of it as already done while to others it may seem far off and even impossible. Such thought, often the work of one mind, sometimes the result of cooperation, is behind every piece of accomplished work. Other elements may doubtless be essential, but there can be no adequate results without organization. And, making allowance for other elements, the perfection of results depends upon the perfection of organization. . . .

For the reason of this tendency we have not far to seek. I believe it is found in the scientific spirit of the age, which is surely pervading every sphere of human thought and activity. The careful investigation of facts, the deduction of the law from the phenomena, the distrust of chance and the loyalty to the law deduced, all of which evidence the scientific spirit, mark alike the great financier, diplomatist, inventor, philanthropist.

In some undertakings organization alone will suffice. For example, making a machine, laying out a railroad, compiling a volume of statistics. In others there must needs come in what I will call the human element, the consideration of people, not in masses, but as individuals, that matchless, indescribable quality which we call human sympathy. . . .

Illustrations might be multiplied in educational, religious, and philanthropic efforts where we work for the masses, and forget that each one of the mass is a human being with passions, sensibilities, aspirations like our own. This interest in the human being as such, which is a gift to some, can be cultivated, but it can never be simulated. The counterfeit always rings false. Joined to a good memory for names and faces, it gives a person a power which can hardly be estimated. . . .

It seems to me that these two principles apply with tremendous and unusual force to the problems of the modern library. I will speak of the public library alone because it has a wider reach and a closer touch on life.

We will review in imagination the library situation in this



country. We take up Mr. Flint's Statistics volume for 1893; we sum up 593 free libraries in the New England states, 520 in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, 285 in the Southern states, 758 in the Western states, a total of 2156 free libraries.

We recall our friends in the American Library Association, who constitute with some marked exceptions, who prefer to work alone, the high-water mark of the fraternity. As their names pass before us we take a measure of the men and women. We think of their libraries which we may have visited, or, better still, which we have used as readers. In some few cases we know the influence of these libraries in the town or city. Take it for all in all we find a body of hard-working men and women translating into practice noble ideals. As a result, the library is beginning to get a hold upon the community. But it is only a beginning and, compared with the possibilities, only a prophecy of what may and will be. Are not the failures in our work due to the lack of the best organization and the true human touch?

A librarian is appointed, let us say, to an important post. He has doubtless had experience in library work. He comes on to consult with the trustees. They vote to send him on a trip for getting ideas from other libraries. He probably has on his hands a beautiful building illy adapted to library work. He carries the plans with him, and spends most of the time with other members of the craft, in choosing the least of several evils in placing the reference-room, catalog, charging-desk, etc. He secures two or three assistants with training, experience, or both, and fills the minor places with local help chosen by examination or by luck or by personal favor. He learns in a general way the character of the town and selects books with that in view. If there are certain manufacturing interests or a particular foreign population, he makes large purchases in those lines. He decides on a system of classification, of cataloging, and on a method of charging. The books are rushed through the various processes, though all too slowly for an impatient public. In a few months at the latest the big educational plant begins to be utilized.

The circulation surprises the most sanguine, the average of fiction drops a little below the usual mark, good service is done at the information or reference desk by the enthusi-

astic man or woman having it in charge, work is begun with the schools, and a little fraction of teachers make the children know books because they know books themselves. The rest go through the motions. The bookworm fills his corner, the chronic grumbler has his little say, the usual number of prize questions are answered. The library becomes the very bread of life to those who are ready to receive it, and gives refreshment and suggestion and inspiration to many more. The profession approves. At the next A. L. A. meeting Mr. —— is brought forward more prominently, and the wise ones say, "I always thought he was a rising man."

But only 20 per cent. of the population ever set foot within the library, and when a stranger asks the way within a block of the building, a fairly intelligent-looking workman does not appear to know there is such a thing as the public library.

In looking over the proceedings of the library association for the 18 years of its existence, we are struck by the evidences of industry and earnestness. There are papers and discussions on libraries and schools, access to the shelves, bookbinding, systems of classification, cataloging rules. The keynote is cooperation in securing, with an enthusiasm which amounts to missionary zeal, the best and most uniform methods, with special reference to mechanical devices. The very motto smacks of arithmetic and commerce. "The best reading for the largest number at the least cost." All this is good and proper in its place. Wise methods are essential to the best results. But we sought in vain all along the years for the philosophic insight which should grasp the higher motive of our profession and connect it with the great struggles of our modern life. After the Columbus year in the clearer air of the mountain-top, the word for which we were waiting came. I wish it were possible to stop right here and give you the papers of Mr. Larned and Mr. Brett, which were read at Lake Placid, as well as the discussion which followed. I must content myself by quoting Mr. Larned's last sentence: "Those of us who have faith in the future of democracy can only hold our faith fast by believing that the knowledge of the learned,

the wisdom of the thoughtful, the conscience of the upright, will some day be common enough to prevail, always, over every factious folly and every mischievous movement that evil minds or ignorance can set astir. When that blessed time of victory shall have come, there will be many to share the glory of it; but none among them will rank rightly before those who have led and inspired the work of the public libraries."

This leads us to the first great need of the profession to-day, that the librarian should be in the noblest sense a large man, that he should add to executive and business ability and technical knowledge a broad and generous culture in Matthew Arnold's sense of the word, "An inward spiritual activity, having for its character increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy." He must be an omnivorous reader, skimming many books, and knowing by instinct which books and which chapters and sentences to read carefully. He must study from books and in life the great industrial, social, and religious questions which stir our age. He must be a scholar without pedantry, a man of the world without indifference, a friend of the people without sentimentality.

There follows naturally the second necessity, that the librarian should be a careful student of his own town. He should know its history and topography, its social, political, business, literary, and ecclesiastical life. To this end he should have a personal acquaintance with the city officers, the party bosses, the labor leaders, members of the board of trade, manufacturers, leading women in society, with the clergy, with the school superintendent and the teachers, with those who shape the charitable organizations, with reporters, policemen, and reformers.

To what end? Broadly that he may catch the spirit of the civic life and relate the library to the whole as the organs to the body. Specifically, that he may reach the entire population through the natural leaders, that he may select books, establish branches, open up new avenues of communication between the library and the people.

The church may be aristocratic, industry, trade, and politics a war, the public school like the drinking-fountain, though

planned for the many scorned by the few. I believe it is possible for a man with a broad and sympathetic knowledge of our age and an intimate knowledge of his own city, to make of the public library the one common meeting-place, the real focus of democratic ideas. The church and the school will reach this in the future, the library may achieve it to-day.

There is a third difficulty, which is a very real and palpable one. The librarian himself may have a fairly high ideal of the library which is shared by perhaps one or two assistants. The bulk of the work in a library with a large circulation is done by young persons of less opportunity and training. Each has a distinct part of the work to do with little idea of its relation to the whole. Unfortunately the loan-desk, registration-desk, and reading-room are usually manned in this way. I have often stood amazed at the delivery-desk of librarians whose names represent all that is best in the library profession. I would not be understood as depreciating the work of the lower assistants in our libraries. I know well that this service, as a whole, represents an amount of faithfulness and devotion which it ill becomes me to undervalue. The responsibility lies with the head of the library and the failure comes from lack of organization. The appointing power should be practically in his hands. The man whom we have described above does not need to seek this power. It comes to him. It is surely possible to secure for the library service young men and women, boys and girls, of fair intelligence, quick wits, responsive minds, and human sympathies. The making of these units into an organism is the severest test of a librarian's power. The ability of a general is not enough. He must himself have the real human touch or he cannot call it forth from others. There must be the promptness, the accuracy, the despatch which marks military discipline; there must be also an intelligent conception of the purpose of the library, a strong sense of personal responsibility and of the dignity and beauty of the public service. It is sometimes said that spirit of the library should be that of a merchant and his well-trained clerks, anxious to please their customers. It should be rather the fine spirit of a hostess with the daughters of the house about her greeting her guests.

There is a fourth failure which is perhaps the root difficulty. It is the failure to make the most of time. The day opens. The

man hastens to his place and finds a score of voices calling him to as many different tasks. He hastily begins the one which seems to call the loudest, and has just begun to gather up the threads of thought when there is a peremptory call in another direction. And so he is driven through the day, not controlling, but controlled, and constantly lashed by the thought of neglected duties. By dint of keeping at it all through the day and often into the night much work is done. The man gets and deserves the reputation of a hard-working man, deliberately sacrificing health, ease, leisure, and the joys of a scholar's life for the public good.

Now this is the first and natural result of the enlarged conception of a librarian's work. The man is dazed by the sense of responsibility and almost crushed by the demands upon his time apparently separate and conflicting. But this should be considered only the first process from which the strong man will speedily evolve a wiser way. The fatal mistake lies in considering this first stage inevitable and final. If a man tarries here it argues limitation, not power. There certainly are men who stand high in public life as well as those holding less prominent positions, who accomplish an enormous amount of work with a sense of freedom and an impression of leisure. As I have observed individual cases, I am led to the conclusion that the explanation lies not in a stronger physique, or a stronger intellect, but in a better organization of work with reference to time. There is no need more imperative than this for all of us who are proud to be called busy people. The trouble is, we think we are too busy to stop and plan. Our philosophic error lies in believing that the work must all be done to-day. Nature herself should teach us that the best work cannot be done in a hurry.

We may not hope in this generation to understand well the working of that complex, mysterious thing which we call human society, but we may at least so relate ourselves and our libraries to it that we may live, move, and grow together.

“Not unrelated, ununified,  
But to each thought and thing allied,  
Is perfect Nature's every part  
Rooted in the mighty Heart.”





## WHAT A LIBRARY SHOULD BE AND WHAT IT CAN DO

No one has done more to inspire library workers with the feeling that what they are doing is worth while than Dr. Melvil Dewey, pioneer in this country of the modern library and of the socialized library spirit. A sketch of Dr. Dewey will be found in Vol. I. of this series. The following is from the stenographer's report of a brief talk at the Atlanta Conference of the American Library Association, as printed in *Public Libraries* (Chicago, June, 1899).

Atlanta has been known long in this country as a southern city that believes supremely that education pays, and as the revelation has come late in this century of what the library is or should be, and what the library can do, on this line I will say a few words to you tonight.

We have had an illustration in the recent war with Spain that education pays, in what it means to have the man behind the guns trained. We have an illustration in Mr. Carnegie's work, whose name has been mentioned here in his competition with the rest of the world, illustrating another peculiar American feature that American education pays in dollars and cents; but it is a more recent conception of the part the library has in a system of public education. It took a thousand years to develop our educational system from the university down; first the university as the beginning of all education, and then we must have the colleges to prepare for the universities, the academies and common schools to prepare for the colleges, and it is only in our own generation that we have come to understand that we must begin with the kindergarten and end in our libraries.

I am really pleased tonight that the Young men's associa-

tion has done this generous work, and that Atlanta is going to pay the money from the taxes. It would be no advantage to this city if your schools were provided for you without charge to the people. Those who study the question from the low plane of dollars and cents, without regard to the higher things in life, have learned that no investigation pays well. In many a community men are giving liberally to the schools, and are beginning to give liberally to the libraries, and they do it because they know it makes everything more valuable—it makes their business more prosperous.

The library is going through the same process the public school went through. Henry Barnard, of Connecticut, visited 27 different states and spoke before them to urge upon them the system of public education, and to provide a guidance for the children.

It is true that the educated parents are more likely to have children educated highly, but there is no question whatever that the great majority of the men and women who are to shape the future of this country will be born in the humblest homes, and we come back to the problem of the general education of all the people as the best possible advancement and the chiefest defense of the nation; it is the concern of the state because it is the duty of the state, because it pays, and because the state does not dare any longer to neglect it. Therefore I call your attention to the fact that we are repeating in libraries exactly the process of the school, and that there were meetings to urge the acceptance of them. There are few who doubt the wisdom of donating money to support the free library, and when the history of the time is written it will be marked as the history of free libraries.

Why is it that the people are taxing themselves erecting beautiful buildings, buying books, paying salaries, printing catalogs, incurring all these expenses, paying out an amount of money that a short time ago would have been thought only a dream? It is a recognition of its necessity and importance. We understand that it is a good thing.

A broad conception at the end of the century of the work of the schools is simply this, to teach the children to think accurately, with strength and with speed. If it is in the school that they get their start, then where do they get their education? Tell me from your own experience, was it from the school

that you got most of your ideas? We had an experiment some time ago, when the teachers of New York made an elaborate investigation as to the teaching of boys and girls. The thing that influenced those boys and girls most was the books they read. What, after all, is the supreme end of education? I state that we should teach them to think with accuracy and with speed, but I doubt if there is one who denies the supreme necessity of the building of character. That is what is winning in the peaceful conflicts of commerce. If you care to analyze how character is built, follow it back briefly. Character comes from habits, and habits from actions repeated, and actions from a motive, and a motive from reflection. What makes me reflect? What makes you reflect? What is the cause? Isn't it something that you have read in a book, a magazine, or a paper? So the genealogy is this: reading begets reflection, reflection begets motive, motive begets action, and action begets habit, and habit begets that supreme thing—character. So we have come to recognize that if we are to accomplish the chief end that is before the people, we must strive to control the reading for others.

Reading sometimes carries downhill, as it often carries upward, and there is no way that we can reach the people except through the free library and with proper help from the people.

What Atlanta wants to make out of her citizens is not to train privates, but to train officers. If you go out on the streets you can find a thousand men to do the work of a laborer, where you can find only a few to do the work that will demand five or ten thousand dollars. The world is looking for that class of men. It is the highest salaried man that is the hardest to find. If you would buy a machine, there enters into it the material that is in it; the process of manufacture throughout which has transformed it, and then the approved fitness for performing its functions. The same way with a man—the native that is manufactured; then comes the experience which proves the fitness for his work; and you pay the salary for these things. And by means of our schools and libraries we must reach these girls and boys.

Thomas Edison and other great men say that their whole lives are governed from reading a single book. So the province of the library is to amuse, to inform and inspire. We

have the old proverbs, As free as air; As free as water; but the new one that is important to the race is, As free as knowledge. The people of this state cannot afford to have any boy in Georgia who is anxious to know more, how to make his life more valuable, who wants inspiration and is ready to read, and not furnish it to him. Education is the chief concern of the American people, and the states that have done most for their education have been the most prosperous.

It is the concern of the richest as to what should be done for the poorest; you should provide free schools and free libraries, or the failure to do so will react in your own lives. If you say that this ideal is too high, that the library has important functions, but it does not take its place as the equal of the schools, it is because you have not studied this question in all its details. When you do, you will be forced to the conclusion that while we must say that this is the inspiration of a dreamer, remember that it is the devotion of noble minds that never falters, but endures and waits for all it can find, and what it cannot find, creates.

## THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN AMERICAN LIFE

As the last of this particular group of papers we reproduce a view of our public library system by a foreigner who had lived in this country long enough to appreciate it and who was yet able to contrast it with the library systems of European countries—Prof. Munsterberg of Harvard.

Hugo Munsterberg was born in Danzig, Germany, June 1, 1863, educated at Leipzig and Heidelberg, and after serving as assistant professor at the University of Freiburg, became professor of psychology at Harvard in 1892, where he served until his death on Dec. 16, 1916. The subjoined extract is from his book "The Americans" (New York, 1904).

The American's fondness for reading finds clearest expression in the growth of libraries, and in few matters of civilization is America so well fitted to teach the Old World a lesson. Europe has many large and ancient collections of books, and Germany more than all the rest; but they serve only one single purpose—that of scientific investigation; they are the laboratories of research. They are chiefly lodged with the great universities, and even the large municipal libraries are mostly used by those who need material for productive labors, or wish to become conversant with special topics.

Exactly the same type of large library has grown up in America; and here, too, it is chiefly the universities whose stock of books is at the service of the scientific world. Besides these, there are special libraries belonging to learned societies, state law libraries, special libraries of government bureaus and of museums, and largest of all the Library of Congress. The collection of such scientific books began at the earliest

colonial period, and at first under theological auspices. The Calvinist Church, more than any other, inclined to the study of books. As early as 1790 the catalog of Harvard College contained 350 pages, of which 150 were taken up by theological works. Harvard has to-day almost a million books, mostly in the department of literature, philology, history, philosophy, and jurisprudence. There are, moreover, in Boston the state library of law, with over a hundred thousand volumes; the Athenaeum, with more than two hundred thousand books; the large scientific library of the Institute of Technology, and many others. Similarly, in other large cities, the university libraries are the nucleus for scientific labors, and are surrounded by admirable special libraries, particularly in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Then, too, the small academic towns, like Princeton, Ithaca, New Haven, and others, have valuable collections of books, which in special subjects are often unique. For many years the American university libraries have been the chief purchasers of the special collections left by deceased European professors. And it often happens, especially through the gift of grateful alumni, that collections of the greatest scientific value, which could not be duplicated, come into the possession even of lesser institutions.

In many departments of investigation, Washington takes the lead with the large collection of the various scientific, economic, and technical bureaus of the government. The best known of these is the unique medical library of the War Department. Then there is the Library of Congress, with many more than a million volumes, which today has an official right to one copy of every book published in the United States, and so may claim to be a national library. It is still not comparable to the many-sided and complete collection of the British Museum; the national library is one-sided, or at least shows striking gaps. Having started as the Library of Congress, it has, aside from its one copy of every American book and the books on natural science belonging to the Smithsonian Institution, few books except those on politics, history, political economy, and law. The lack of space for books, which existed until a few years ago, made it seem inexpedient to spend money for purposes other than the convenience of congressmen. But the American people, in its love for books, has now erected such a building as the



world had never before seen devoted to the storing of books. The new Congressional Library was opened in 1897, and since the stacks have still room for several million volumes, the library will soon grow to an all-round completeness like that at London. This Library has a specially valuable collection of manuscripts and correspondences.

All the collections of books which we have so far mentioned are virtually like those of Germany. But since they mostly date from the nineteenth century, the American libraries are more modern, and contain less dead weight in the way of unused folios. Much more important is their greatly superior accessibility. Their reading-rooms are more comfortable and better lighted, their catalogs more convenient, library hours longer, and, above all, books are more easily and quickly delivered. Brooks Adams said recently, about the library at Washington as a place for work, that this building is well-nigh perfect; it is large, light, convenient, and well provided with attendants. In Paris and London, one works in dusty, forbidding, and overcrowded rooms, while here the reading-rooms are numerous, attractive, and comfortable. In the National Library at Paris, one has to wait an hour for a book; in the British Museum, half an hour, and in Washington, five minutes. This rapid service, which makes such a great difference to the student, is found everywhere in America; and everywhere the books are housed in buildings which are palatial, although perhaps not so beautiful as the Washington Library.

Still, all these differences are unessential; in principle the academic libraries are alike in the New and Old Worlds. The great difference between Europe and America begins with the libraries which are not learned, but which are designed to serve popular education. The American public library which is not for science, but for education, is to the European counterpart as the Pullman express train to the village post-chaise.

The scientific libraries of Boston, including that of Harvard University, contain nearly two million printed works; but the largest library of all is distinct from these. It is housed on Copley Square, in a renaissance palace by the side of the Art Museum, and opposite the most beautiful church in America. The staircase of yellow marble, the wonderful wall-paintings, the fascinating arcade on the inner court and the sunlit halls

are indeed beautiful. And in and out, from early morning till late evening, week-day and Sunday, move the people of Boston. The stream of men divides in the lower vestibule. Some go to the newspaper room, where several hundred daily newspapers, a dozen of them German, hang on racks. Others wander to the magazine rooms, where the weekly and monthly papers of the world are waiting to be read. Others ascend to the upper stories, where Sargent's famous pictures of the Prophets allure the lover of art, in order to look over more valuable special editions and the art magazines, geographical charts, and musical works. The largest stream of all goes to the second floor, partly into the huge quiet reading-room, partly into the rotunda, which contains the catalog, partly into the hall containing the famous frescoes of the Holy Grail, where the books are given out. Here a million and a half books are delivered every year to be taken home and read. And no one has to wait; an apparatus carries the applicant's card with wonderful speed to the stacks, and the desired book is sent back in automatic cars. Little children meanwhile wander into the juvenile room, where they find the best books for children. And everything invites even the least patient reader to sit down quietly with some sort of a volume--everything is so tempting, so convenient and comfortable, and so surpassingly beautiful. And all this is free to the humblest working-man.

And still, if the citizen of Massachusetts were to be asked of what feature of the public libraries he is most proud, he would probably not mention this magnificent palace in Boston, the capital of the state, but rather the 350 free public libraries scattered through the smaller cities and towns of this state, which is after all only one-third as large as Bavaria. It is these many libraries which do the broadest work for the people. Each little collection, wherever it is, is the center of intellectual and moral enlightenment, and plants and nourishes the desire for self-perfection. Of course, Massachusetts has done more in this respect than any other ward in this respect. But there is no longer any city of moderate size which has not a large public library, and there is no state which does encourage in every possible way the establishment of public libraries in every small community, giving financial aid if it is necessary.

Public libraries have become the favorite Christmas present of philanthropists, and while the hospitals, universities, and

museums, have still no reason for complaint, the churches now find the superfluous millions are less apt to go to gay church windows than to well chosen book collections. In the year 1900 there existed more than 5383 public libraries having over a thousand volumes; of these 144 had more than fifty thousand, and 54 had more than a hundred thousand volumes. All together contained, according to the statistics of 1900 more than forty-four million volumes and more than seven million pamphlets; and the average growth was over 8 per cent. There are probably to-day, therefore, fifteen million volumes more on the shelves. The many thousand libraries which have fewer than 999 books are over and above all this.

The make-up of such public libraries may be seen from the sample catalog gotten out by the Library Association a few years since, as a typical collection of five thousand books. This catalog, which, with the exception of the most important foreign classics, contains only books in English, including, however, many translations, contains 227 general reference books, 756 books on history, 635 on biography, 413 on travel, 355 on natural science, 694 on belles-lettres, 809 novels, 225 on art, 220 on religion, 424 on social science, 268 on technical subjects, etc. The cost of this sample collection is \$12,000. The proportions between the several divisions are about the same in larger collections. In smaller collections, belles-lettres have a somewhat greater share. The general interest taken by the nation in this matter is shown by the fact that the first edition of 20,000 copies of this sample catalog, of 600 pages, was soon exhausted.

The many-sidedness of this catalog points also to the manifold functions of the public library. It is meant to raise the educational level of the people, and this can be done in three ways: first, interest may be stimulated along new lines; second, those who wish to perfect themselves in their own subjects or in whatsoever special topics, may be provided with technical literature; and third, the general desire for literary entertainment may be satisfied by books of the best or at least not of the worst sort. The directors of libraries see their duties to lie in all three directions. The libraries guide the tastes and interests of the general public, and try to replace the ordinary servant-girl's novel with the best romance of the day and shallow literature with works that are truly instructive. And no community is quite content until its public library has become a sort of gen-

eral meeting-place and substitute for the saloon and the club. America is the working-man's paradise, and attractive enough to the rich man; but the ordinary man of the middle classes, who in Germany finds his chief comfort in the Bierhalle would find little comfort in America if it were not for the public library, which offers him a home. Thus the public library has come to be a recognized instrument of culture along with the public school; and in all American outposts the school teacher and librarian are among the pioneers.

The learned library cannot do this. To be sure, the university library can help to spread information, and conversely the public library makes room for thousands of volumes on all sorts of scientific topics. But the emphasis is laid very differently in the two cases, and if it were not so neither library would best fulfil its purpose. The extreme quiet of the reference library and the bustle and stir of the public library do not go together. In the one direction America has followed the dignified traditions of Europe; in the other, it has opened new paths and travelled on at a rapid pace. Every year discovers new ideas and plans, new schemes for equipment and the selection of books, for cataloging, and for otherwise gaining in utility. When, for instance, the library in Providence commenced to post a complete list of books and writings pertaining to the subject of every lecture that was given in the city, it was the initiation of a great movement. The juvenile departments are the product of recent years, and are constantly increasing in popularity. There are even, in some cases, departments for blind readers. The state commissions are new, and so also the travelling libraries, which are carried from one village to another.

The great schools for librarians are also new. The German librarian is mostly a scholar; but the American believes that he has improved on the European library systems, not so much by his ample financial resources as by having broken with the academic custom, and having secured librarians with a special library training. And since there are such officials in many thousand libraries, and the great institutions create a constant demand for such persons, the library schools, which offer generally a three years' course, having been found very successful.

Admittedly, all this technical apparatus is expensive; the

Boston library expends every year a quarter of a million dollars for administrative expenses. But the American taxpayer supports this more gladly than any other burden, knowing that the public library is the best weapon against alcoholism and crime, against corruption and discontent, and that the democratic country can flourish only when the instinct of self-perfection as it exists in every American is thoroughly satisfied.





## BOOKS AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

This paper and the two that follow it relate specifically to reading as fostered by the public library and yet not sufficiently to the provision of books to the public as a definite library service to warrant postponing them to the section relating to that branch of community service. They have a somewhat academic or "literary flavor," and yet are permeated not with the idea of "books for scholars" but with that of "books for people"—the idea of reading as a universal function—duty, pleasure and inspiration in one—which is distinctly that of a socialized library. The first paper is an address made by Lowell at the opening of the new public library building at Chelsea, Mass., Dec. 22, 1885.

James Russell Lowell was born in Cambridge, Mass., Feb. 22, 1819, and graduated at Harvard in 1838, succeeding Longfellow as professor of Literature there in 1855. He edited *The North American Review* in 1863-72, served as U. S. minister to Spain in 1877-80 and to Great Britain in 1880-85. He died in Cambridge, Aug. 12, 1891.

"A few years ago my friend, Mr. Alexander Ireland, published a very interesting volume which he called "The book-lover's euchiridion," the handbook, that is to say, of those who love books. It was made up of extracts from the writings of a great variety of distinguished men, ancient and modern, in praise of books. It was a chorus of many voices in many tongues, a hymn of gratitude and praise, full of such piety and fervor as can be paralleled only in songs dedicated to the supreme power, the supreme wisdom and the supreme love. Nay,

there is a glow of enthusiasm and sincerity in it which is often painfully wanting in those other too commonly mechanical compositions. We feel at once that here it is out of the fullness of the heart, yes, and of the head, too, that the mouth speaketh. Here was none of that compulsory commonplace which is wont to characterize those 'testimonials of celebrated authors,' by means of which publishers sometimes strive to linger out the passages of a hopeless book toward its *requiescat* in oblivion. These utterances which Mr. Ireland has gathered lovingly together are stamped with that spontaneousness which is the mint mark of all sterling speech. It is true that they are mostly, as is only natural, the utterances of literary men, and there is a well-founded proverbial distrust of herring that bear only the brand of the packer, and not that of the sworn inspector. But to this objection a cynic might answer with the question, 'Are authors so prone, then, to praise the works of other people that we are to doubt them when they do it unasked?' Perhaps the wisest thing I could have done to-night would have been to put upon the stand some of the more weighty of this cloud of witnesses. But since your invitation implied that I should myself say something, I will endeavor to set before you a few of the commonplaces of the occasion, as they may be modified by passing through my own mind, or by having made themselves felt in my own experience.

The greater part of Mr. Ireland's witnesses testify to the comfort and consolation they owe to books, to the refuge they have found in them from sorrow or misfortune, to their friendship, never estranged and outliving all others. This testimony they volunteered. Had they been asked, they would have borne evidence as willingly to the higher and more general uses of books in their service to the commonwealth, as well as to the individual man. Consider, for example, how a single page of Burke may emancipate the young student of politics from narrow views and merely contemporaneous judgments. Our English ancestors, with that common-sense which is one of the most useful, though not one of the most engaging, properties of the race, made a rhyming proverb, which says that:

"When land and goods are gone and spent,  
Then learning is most excellent";

and this is true, so far as it goes, though it goes, perhaps,

hardly far enough. The law also calls only the earth and what is immovably attached to it *real* property, but I am of opinion that those only are real possessions which abide with a man after he has been stripped of those others falsely so called, and which alone save him from seeming and from being the miserable forked radish to which the bitter scorn of Lear degraded every child of Adam. The riches of scholarship, the benignities of literature, defy fortune and outlive calamity. They are beyond the reach of thief or moth or rust. As they cannot be inherited, so they cannot be alienated. But they may be shared, they may be distributed, and it is the object and office of a free public library to perform these beneficial functions.

"Books," says Wordsworth, "are a real world," and he was thinking, doubtless, of such books as are not merely the triumphs of pure intellect, however supreme, but of those in which intellect infused with the sense of beauty aims rather to produce delight than conviction, or, if conviction, then through intuition rather than formal logic, and, leaving what Donne wisely calls

"Unconscious things, matters of fact,"

to science and the understanding, seeks to give ideal expression to the abiding realities of the spiritual world for which the outward and visible world serves at best but as the husk and symbol. Am I wrong in using the word *realities*?—wrong in insisting on the distinction between the real and the actual? in assuming for the ideal an existence as absolute and self-subsistent as that which appeals to our senses—nay, so often cheats them in the matter of fact? How very small a part of the world we truly live in is represented by what speaks to us through the senses when compared with that vast realm of the mind which is peopled by memory and imagination, and with such shining inhabitants! These walls, these faces, what are they in comparison with the countless images, the innumerable population which every one of us can summon up to the tiny show-box of the brain, in material breadth scarce a span, yet infinite as space and time? And in what, I pray, are those we gravely call historical characters, of which each new historian strains his neck to get a new and different view, in any sense more real than the personages of fiction? Do not serious and earnest men discuss Hamlet as they would Cromwell or Lincoln? Does Cæsar, does Alaric, hold existence by

any other or stronger tenure than the Christian of Bunyan or the Don Quixote of Cervantes or the Antigone of Sophocles? Is not the history which is luminous because of an indwelling and perennial truth to nature, because of that light which never was on land or sea, really *more* true, in the highest sense, than many a weary chronicle with names, date, and place in which "an Amurath to Amurath succeeds"? Do we know as much of any authentic Danish prince as of Hamlet?

But to come back a little nearer to Chelsea and the occasion that has called us together. The founders of New England, if sometimes, when they found it needful, an impracticable, were always a practical people. Their first care, no doubt, was for an adequate supply of powder, and they encouraged the manufacture of musket bullets by enacting that they should pass as currency at a farthing each—a coinage nearer to its nominal value, and not heavier than some with which we are familiar. Their second care was that "good learning should not perish from among us," and to this end they at once established the Latin School in Boston, and soon after the college at Cambridge. The nucleus of this was, as you all know, the bequest in money by John Harvard. Hardly less important, however, was the legacy of his library, a collection of good books, inconsiderable measured by the standard of to-day, but very considerable then as the possession of a private person. From that little acorn what an oak has sprung, and from its acorn again what a vocal forest, as old Howell would have called it—old Howell, whom I love to cite, because his name gave their title to the 'Essays of Elia,' and is borne with slight variation by one of the most delightful of modern authors! It was, in my judgment, those two foundations, more than anything else, which gave to New England character its bent and to Boston that literary supremacy which, I am told, she is in danger of losing, but which she will not lose till she and all the world lose Holmes.

The opening of a free public library, then, is a most important event in the history of any town. A college training is an excellent thing; but, after all, the better part of every man's education is that which he gives himself, and it is for this that a good library should furnish the opportunity and the means. I have sometimes thought that our public schools undertook to teach too much, and that the older system, which

taught merely the three R's, and taught them well, leaving natural selection to decide who should go farther, was the better. However this may be, all that is primarily needful in order to use a library is the ability to read. I say primarily, for there must also be the inclination, and, after that, some guidance in reading well. Formerly the duty of a librarian was considered too much that of a watchdog to keep people as much as possible away from the books, and to hand these over to his successor as little worn by use as he could. Librarians now, it is pleasant to see, have a different notion of their trust, and are in the habit of preparing for the direction of the inexperienced lists of such books as they think best worth reading. Cataloging has also, thanks in great measure to American librarians, become a science, and catalogs, ceasing to be labyrinths without a clew, are furnished with finger-posts at every turn. Subject catalogs again save the beginner a vast deal of time and trouble, by supplying him for nothing with one at least of the results of thorough scholarship, the knowing where to look for what he wants. I do not mean by this that there is or can be any short-cut to learning, but that there may be, and is, such a short cut to information that will make learning more easily accessible.

But have you ever rightly considered what the mere ability to read means? That it is the key that admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination; to the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and the wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moment? That it enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all time? More than that, it annihilates time and space for us; it revives for us without a miracle the Age of Wonder, endowing us with the shoes of swiftness and the cap of darkness, so that we walk invisible like fern seed and witness unharmed the plague at Athens or Florence or London, accompanying Cæsar on his marches, or look in on Catiline in council with his fellow-conspirators, or Guy Fawkes in the cellar of St. Stephen's. We often hear of people who will descend to any servility, submit to any insult, for the sake of getting themselves or their children into what is euphemistically called good society. Did it ever occur to them that there is a select society of all the centuries to which they and theirs can be admitted for the asking—a society, too,



which will not involve them in ruinous expense and still more ruinous waste of time and health and faculties?

Southey tells us that, in his walk, one stormy day, he met an old woman, to whom, by way of greeting, he made the rather obvious remark that it was dreadful weather. She answered, philosophically, that, in her opinion, 'any weather was better than none!' I should be half inclined to say that any reading was better than none, allaying the crudeness of the statement by the Yankee proverb, which tells us that, though 'all deacons are good, there's odds in deacons.' Among books, certainly there is much variety of company, ranging from the best to the worst, from Plato to Zola, and the first lesson in reading well is that which teaches us to distinguish between literature and merely printed matter. The choice lies wholly with ourselves. We have the key put into our hands; shall we unlock the pantry or the oratory? There is a Wallachian legend which, like most of the figments of popular fancy, has a moral in it. One Bakála, a good-for-nothing kind of fellow in his way, having had the luck to offer a sacrifice especially well pleasing to God, is taken up into heaven. He finds the Almighty sitting in something like the best room of a Wallachian peasant's cottage—there is always something profoundly pathetic in the homeliness of the popular imagination, forced, like the princess in the fairy tale, to weave its semblance of gold tissue out of straw. On being asked what reward he desires for the good service he has done, Bakála, who had always passionately longed to be the owner of a bagpipe, seeing a half wornout one lying among some rubbish in a corner of the room, begs eagerly that it may be bestowed on him. The Lord, with a smile of pity at the meanness of his choice, grants him his boon, and Bakála goes back to earth delighted with his prize. With an infinite possibility within his reach, with the choice of wisdom, of power, of beauty at his tongue's end, he asked according to his kind, and his sordid wish is answered with a gift as sordid. Yes, there is a choice in books as in friends, and the mind sinks or rises to the level of its habitual society, is subdued, as Shakespeare says of the dyer's hand, to what it works in. Cato's advice, *cum bonis ambula*, consort with the good, is quite as true if we extend it to books, for they, too, insensibly give away their own nature to the mind that converses with them. They



either beckon upward or drag down. And it is certainly true that the material of thought reacts upon the thought itself. Shakespeare himself would have been commonplace had he been paddocked in a thinly shaven vocabulary, and Phidias, had he worked in wax, only a more inspired Mrs. Jarley. A man is known, says the proverb, by the company he keeps, and not only so, but made by it. Milton makes his fallen angels grow small to enter the infernal council room, but the soul, which God meant to be the spacious chamber where high thoughts and generous aspirations might commune together, shrinks and narrows itself to the measure of the meaner company that is wont to gather there, hatching conspiracies against our better selves. We are apt to wonder at the scholarship of the men of three centuries ago and at a certain dignity of phrase that characterizes them. They were scholars because they did not read so many things as we. They had fewer books, but these were of the best. Their speech was noble, because they lunched with Plutarch and supped with Plato. We spend as much time over print as they did, but instead of communing with the choice thoughts of choice spirits, and unconsciously acquiring the grand manner of that supreme society, we diligently inform ourselves and cover the continent with a network of speaking wires to inform us of such inspiring facts as that a horse belonging to Mr. Smith ran away on Wednesday, seriously damaging a valuable carryall; that a son of Mr. Brown swallowed a hickory nut on Thursday; and that a gravel bank caved in and buried Mr. Robinson alive on Friday. Alas! it is we ourselves that are getting buried alive under this avalanche of earthy impertinences. It is we who, while we might each in his humble way be helping our fellows into the right path, or adding one block to the climbing spire of a fine soul, are willing to become mere sponges saturated from the stagnant goosepond of village gossip.

One is sometimes asked by young people to recommend a course of reading. My advice would be that they should confine themselves to the supreme books in whatever literature, or still better to choose some one great author, and make themselves thoroughly familiar with him. For, as all roads lead to Rome, so do they likewise lead away from it, and you will find that, in order to understand perfectly and weigh exactly any vital piece of literature, you will be gradually and

pleasantly persuaded to excursions and explorations of which you little dreamed when you began, and will find yourselves scholars before you are aware. For remember that there is nothing less profitable than scholarship for the mere sake of scholarship, nor anything more wearisome in the attainment. But the moment you have a definite aim attention is quickened, the mother of memory, and all that you acquire groups and arranges itself in an order that is lucid, because everywhere and always it is in intelligent relation to a central object of constant and growing interest. This method also forces upon us the necessity of thinking, which is, after all, the highest result of all education. For what we want is not learning, but knowledge—that is, the power to make learning answer its true end as a quickener of intelligence and a widener of our intellectual sympathies. I do not mean to say that every one is fitted by nature or inclination for a definite course of study, or indeed for serious study in any sense. I am quite willing that these should ‘browse in a library,’ as Dr. Johnson called it, to their hearts’ content. It is, perhaps, the only way in which time may be profitably wasted. But desultory reading will not make a “full man,” as Bacon understood it, of one who has not Johnson’s memory, his power of assimilation, and, above all, his comprehensive view of the relations of things. “Read not,” says Lord Bacon, in his “Essay of Studies,” “to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested—that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously (carefully), and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. *Some books also may be read by deputy.*” This is weighty and well said, and I would call your attention especially to the wise words with which the passage closes.

I have been speaking of such books as should be chosen for profitable reading. A public library, of course, must be far wider in its scope. It should contain something for all tastes, as well as the material for a thorough grounding in all branches of knowledge. It should be rich in books of reference, in encyclopædias, where one may learn without cost of research what things are generally known. For it is far more

useful to know these than to know those that are *not* generally known. Not to know them is the defect of those half trained and therefore hasty men who find a mare's nest on every branch of the tree of knowledge. A library should contain ample stores of history, which, if it do not always deserve the pompous title which Bolingbroke gave it, of philosophy teaching by example, certainly teaches many things profitable for us to know and lay to heart; teaches among other things how much of the present is still held in mortmain by the past; teaches that, if there be no controlling purpose, there is, at least, a sternly logical sequence in human affairs, and that chance has but a trifling dominion over them; teaches why things are and must be so and not otherwise; teaches, perhaps, more than anything else, the value of personal character as a chief factor in what used to be called destiny, for that cause is strong which has not a multitude but one strong man behind it. History is indeed mainly the biography of a few imperial men, and forces home upon us the useful lesson how infinitesimally important our own private affairs are to the universe in general. History is clarified experience, and yet how little do men profit by it—nay, how should we expect it of those who so seldom are taught anything by their own! Delusions, especially economical delusions, seem the only things that have any chance of an earthly immortality. I would have plenty of biography. It is no insignificant fact that eminent men have always loved their Plutarch, since example, whether for emulation or avoidance, is never so poignant as when presented to us in a striking personality. Autobiographies are also instructive reading to the student of human nature, though generally written by men who were more interesting to themselves than to their fellow-men. I have been told that Emerson and George Eliot agreed in thinking Rousseau's "Confessions" the most interesting book they had ever read.

A public library should also have many and full shelves of political economy, for the dismal science, as Carlyle called it, if it prove nothing else, will go far toward proving that theory is the bird in the bush, though she sing more sweetly than the nightingale, and that the millennium will not hasten its coming in deference to the most convincing string of resolutions that were ever unanimously adopted in public meeting.

It likewise induces in us a profound distrust of social panaceas.

I would have a public library abundant in translations of the best books in all languages; for though no work of genius can be adequately translated, because every word of it is permeated with what Milton calls 'the precious life blood of a master spirit,' which cannot be transfused into the veins of the best translation, yet some acquaintance with foreign and ancient literatures has the liberalizing effect of foreign travel. He who travels by translation travels more hastily and superficially, but brings home something that is worth having, nevertheless. Translations properly used, by shortening the labor of acquisition, add as many years to our lives as they subtract from the processes of our education.

In such a library the sciences should be fully represented, that men may at least learn to know in what a marvellous museum they live, what a wonder worker is giving them an exhibition daily for nothing. Nor let art be forgotten in all its many forms, not as the antithesis of science, but as her elder or fairer sister, whom we love all the more that her usefulness cannot be demonstrated in dollars and cents. I should be thankful if an every day laborer among us could have his mind illumined, as those of Athens and of Florence had, with some image of what is best in architecture, painting and sculpture to train his crude perceptions and perhaps call out latent faculties. I should like to see the works of Ruskin within the reach of every artisan among us. For I hope some day that the delicacy of touch and accuracy of eye that have made our mechanics in some departments the best in the world may give us the same supremacy in works of wider range and more purely ideal scope.

Voyages and travels I would also have, good store, especially the earlier, when the world was fresh and unhackneyed and men saw things invisible to the modern eye. They are fast sailing ships to waft away from present trouble to the Fortunate Isles.

To wash down the dryer morsels that every library must necessarily offer at its board, let there be plenty of imaginative literature, and let its range be not too narrow to stretch from Dante to the elder Dumas. The world of the imagination is not the world of abstraction and nonentity, as some

conceive, but a world formed out of chaos by the sense of the beauty that is in man and the earth on which he dwells. It is the realm of might be, our heaven of refuge from the shortcomings and disillusion of life. It is, to quote Spenser, who knew it well,

"The world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil."

Do we believe, then, that God gave us in mockery this splendid faculty of sympathy with things that are a joy forever? For my part, I believe that the love and study of works of imagination is of practical utility in a country so profoundly material in its leading tendencies as ours. The hunger after purely intellectual delights, the content with ideal possessions, cannot but be good for us in maintaining a wholesome balance of the character and of the faculties. I for one shall never be persuaded that Shakespeare left a less useful legacy to his countrymen than Watt. We hold all the deepest, all the highest satisfactions of life as tenants of imagination. Nature will keep up the supply of what are called hard-headed people without our help, and, if it come to that, there are other as good uses for heads as at the end of battering rams.

I know that there are many excellent people who object to the reading of novels as a waste of time, if not as otherwise harmful. But I think they are trying to outwit nature, who is sure to prove cunninger than they. Look at children. One boy shall want a chest of tools and one a book, and of those who want books one shall ask for a botany, another for a romance. They will be sure to get what they want, and we are doing a grave wrong to their morals by driving them to do things on the sly, to steal that food which their constitution craves and which is wholesome for them, instead of having it freely and frankly given them as the wisest possible diet. If we cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so neither can we hope to succeed with the opposite experiment. But we may spoil the silk for its legitimate uses. I can conceive of no healthier reading for a boy, or girl either, than Scott's novels or Cooper's, to speak only of the dead. I have found them very good reading at least for one young man, for one middle-aged man, and for one who is growing old. No, no; banish the Antiquary, banish Leather Stocking, and banish all the world! Let us not go about to make life duller than it is.

But I must shut the doors of my imaginary library, or I



shall never end. It is left for me to say a few words of fitting acknowledgment to Mr. Fitz for his judicious and generous gift. It is always a pleasure to me that I believe the custom of giving away money during their lifetime (and there is nothing harder for most men to part with, except prejudice) is more common with Americans than with any other people. It is a still greater pleasure to see that the favorite direction of their beneficence is toward the founding of colleges and libraries. My observation has led me to believe that there is no country in which wealth is so sensible of its obligations as our own. And, as most of our rich men have risen from the ranks, may we not fairly attribute this sympathy with their kind to the benign influence of democracy rightly understood? My dear and honored friend, George William Curtis, told me that he was sitting in front of the late Mr. Ezra Cornell in a convention, where one of the speakers made a Latin quotation. Mr. Cornell leaned forward and asked for a translation of it, which Mr. Curtis gave him. Mr. Cornell thanked him, and added: "If I can help it, no young man shall grow up in New York hereafter without the chance, at least, of knowing what a Latin quotation means when he hears it." This was the germ of Cornell University, and it found food for its roots in that sympathy and thoughtfulness for others of which I just spoke. This is the healthy side of that good nature which democracy tends to foster, and which is so often harmful when it has its root in indolence or indifference; especially harmful where our public affairs are concerned, and where it is easiest, because there we are giving away what belongs to other people. In this country it is as laudably easy to procure signatures to a subscription paper as it is shamefully so to obtain them for certificates of character and recommendations to office. And is not this public spirit a natural evolution from that frame of mind in which New England was colonized, and which found expression in these grave words of Robinson and Brewster: "We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation of which we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other's good, and of the whole." Let us never forget the deep and solemn import of these words. The problem before us is to make a whole of our many discordant parts, many foreign elements, and I



know of no way in which this can better be done than by providing a common system of education and a common door of access to the best books by which that education may be continued, broadened, and made fruitful. For it is certain that, whatever we do or leave undone, those discordant parts and foreign elements are to be, whether we will or no, members of that body which Robinson and Brewster had in mind, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, for good or ill.

There is no way in which a man can build so secure and lasting a monument for himself as in a public library. Upon that he may confidently allow "Resurgam" to be carved, for through his good deed he will rise again in the grateful remembrance and in the lifted and broadened minds and fortified characters of generation after generation. The pyramids may forget their builders, but memorials such as this have longer memories.

Mr. Fitz has done his part in providing your library with a dwelling. It will be for the citizens of Chelsea to provide it with worthy habitants. So shall they, too, have a share in the noble eulogy of the ancient wise man: "The teachers shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."



## THE INFLUENCE OF GOOD BOOKS

The following paragraphs, which are from an address delivered by Rev. Dr. Collyer at the opening of the Richard Sugden Library at Spencer, Mass., are taken from a report in *The Library Journal* (September, 1889). The autobiographical portions, perhaps, are little related to the progress of libraries here in the United States, but their interest is so great that more of them have been included here than are strictly pertinent to our subject.

Robert Collyer was born in Keighley, Yorkshire, Eng., Dec. 8, 1823. He was apprenticed to a blacksmith as a boy of 14, came to Shoemakertown, Pa., with his parents in 1850 and followed there the trade of a hammermaker. Later he entered the ministry of the Unitarian church and in 1860 founded Unity church in Chicago. In 1879 he became pastor of the Church of the Messiah in New York City, where he died in 1912.

When Richard Sugden asked me to come to Spencer and say some word which would fit this occasion, I wrote him by the next mail that I should be ever so glad to come, and felt that it was a great honor to receive such an invitation, and a great pleasure. Nor was the trouble of much account—which touches us all who say Aye to such an invitation on the impulse of the moment and then wonder how we shall make our promise good. My old friend wanted me to come, and not another and better man, and to say the word which was in my heart to-day, whatever this might be; and this was enough, because I had read in the papers—what he was far too modest to tell me, beyond the merest mention—about the gift of Richard Sugden to his town, and so I said it makes no great matter what any man

may say, the thing he has done tells its own story, and tells it more nobly than I could ever hope to do, more nobly and in this fashion which shames my speech. For our words float away on the summer winds, to be caught, it may be, and set in type and read by those who care for such things, and then to die and be forgotten; but this your friend and mine has done in Spencer will be eloquent with the silence which is golden, and still tell its tale when we are all dead and dust who gather here to-day. It is a poor and scant manhood which does not long now and then to be remembered some little while after the grass grows green and the daisies bloom on the grave. To have them speak of us at the fire-side and in the workshop and the market, remembering what was worthy in us and forgetting what was base, though there may be no more to tell by comparison than Dr. Ripley told down in Concord, as he stood by the dust of a man in his own town, and being sorely troubled to find some real worth in the man's life he could dwell on for a moment, said, "He was the best man I ever knew at a fire." I cannot even guess whether Richard Sugden ever thought of this as one of the rewards which must return to him for his gift to Spencer, and I love to think that to his generous heart the work was its own reward. But I say, as we stand here on this day of gift and dedication, that if this had been his sole purpose, to be held in grateful remembrance of his fellow-townsmen and their children through centuries of time, then he has taken out an insurance that will stand good always and keep his memory green in the town of Spencer. And not here alone, but far away across the sea in old Yorkshire, where his home was in the old time before he came to this new world to seek his fortune, and, far more and better than that, to earn it honestly and well. The story will be told there long after to-day and to-morrow, how one of the Sugdens who went out from among them gave this gift, and then the kith and kin will hold up their heads and feel that the fine old name has won still another patent of nobility. A poor youth he was in the narrow, contracted, dear old land, where the poor were held by a cruel bit. And a voice came to him, saying, "Get thee out from thy kindred and thy father's house unto a land that I will tell thee of"; and he followed the voice, as I did also, to the promised land; carved out his fortune honest and fair, I say, but then could not be content to enrich his own family alone,

or, as so many do, to remember his town in his will. He must build this noble structure, please God, in his own lifetime, and convey it by free gift to you and yours forever; and so the work is done, and so well done, to all seeming, that if you care for the gift as your friend has cared for its creation, we may say, as old Andrew Fairservice said of the cathedral in Glasgow, "Keep airn and gunpooder aff it, and it will stand to the crack o'doom."

My friend and yours is also an Englishman and a Yorkshireman, as you know, by birth and breeding, as I am also, and I am the more glad and proud of what he has done for that reason; because I still love old England with a very tender love after these forty years of absence, as I know he does also. But I have had to notice how very many of us who came here from England to find a home in the American republic, and it may be make their fortune, can find nothing so good in this new world as that they left behind them, and no matter how much wealth they may win, they do nothing as a rule for the town they live in, like this your friend has done in Spencer. He could not be content to be a mere exile from England, he must be a citizen of the United States and blend his life with the life in this new world which has made him so much more of a man than he ever could have been had he stayed on that hill-side in old Yorkshire. This is the true home of his heart and life, here he won his wealth and found ample room to grow to be the man you honor, and here is one proof among many he has given in all these years, that while he was born in England and is proud of it, though he may not say so, he was born again in America, and does not love the old land less but the new land more, as every man must who comes here to share your life, if he is worth his salt.

You will pardon me, I know, as you receive the gift, for this word in praise of the giver, while he may find it hard to do so; but for that I do not care, because in asking me to come here and say the word that was in my heart he must run his risk and take it as it came to me, and insisted on being said. Richard Sugden falls into line with our home-born men far and wide, but especially in Massachusetts, who have done or are ready to do some such thing as he has done now in Spencer—building these public libraries in the towns where they live or from which they went away to seek their fortune; public li-

braries, which range with the schools and churches and the town halls; which are the four-square defence of our life as citizens of the republic and of our intelligence and virtue, when they are nobly maintained. They can do no nobler thing. They are sure of their reward, also, if they want one, in the grateful remembrance of their towns and cities, and open the way for others again who wonder what they can do to the finest purpose; men who have made their fortune and have not been struck by what we may call the greenback paralysis, through which the hand that gets takes all the strength from the hand that gives. What can we do better, they will say in such a case, than this Richard Sugden has done for Spencer, and many another man far and wide?—see to it that our town also shall have a public library, which shall be its pride and joy, and make perfect so far as we can the defence from ignorance and vice and crime; open a fountain from which the waters of life may flow forever for those who thirst for knowledge or whatever good books can give them? And, as I have had to notice up among the mountains this summer how I would not feel thirsty till I came to a clear, cool spring, but then would drink to my heart's content, so such fountains as these will also create the thirst they can so nobly allay, while still we keep on drinking in answer to their perpetual invitation, as the years come and go.

And now shall I tell you a very simple story touching my own life, which will help to make good my thought of the worth of this you are doing in Spencer through your free public library, and have been doing, as I understand, these 30 years, which is in itself a great and singular honor to your town, maintaining a free library and reading-room at your own proper charges, for which your friend and fellow-citizen has built this noble edifice, with some such feeling as he had in the old time who built the temple that the ark of the covenant and the rod which budded and the sacred books might have an abiding and splendid home. It was my lot to be born as your friend was and mine, in a poor and small home, with this thirst in my nature, as far back as I can remember, for something to read. And I mind very well the first book I ever bought with my own penny, the delectable history of Whittington and his Cat, which cast such a spell over my imagination that when I went up Highgate Hill over London the other summer, and saw the stone on which poor Dick sat down to hear the bells ringing far below.



which lured him back again to fame and fortune, I found I was a small boy again reading my small wonder-book, and the old stone divided the honors of a tender interest with the red granite shaft set above the grave of the woman of finest genius England has to her name, George Eliot, which is a few minutes' walk away.

There were a few books in our small cottage of three rooms, but these were among the best in the English tongue, the Bible and Bunyan and Goldsmith, with a few more I do not now remember, but these I read as you drink at clear, cool springs. Then a man came along from over the moors and brought Burns with him, and another brought Shakespeare. My father borrowed these for me to read, and the world grew great and wide and wonderful to me as I read them, while to this day I notice that I care more for the history of England in Shakespeare's grand dramas than I do for Hume and Froude and Macaulay, so great was the spell cast again over my life. Then an old farmer came along with a couple of volumes, and said, "Here, lad, I notice thou is fond o' good reading, and I think thou will like to read these books." It was Irving's Sketch-Book and it was Christmas day, and I was away from home then and lonesome, wanting to be with my folks and to sit by the old fireside, but the magic wand of Irving touched me and stole away all my tears. Still, as you may see, this was only hand-to-mouth reading. I had never seen a public library, but had heard of them and longed to find one somewhere, sometime, as, I fear, I never had longed to find my way into heaven. Well, I heard of one that had been started only three miles away, and so I went with my heart in my mouth to see what I could find to read in the wonderful new library. I can see the books now standing on the shelves in the small upper room, and recall the old delight of my youth. I go into the Astor Library now and then when I have time, rich in the lore of all the ages, and have wandered through some of the finest in the world beside, but that small room in Addingham is still the story of one's first love. There were some 200 volumes, but here I was with all this wealth of books at my command at about the cost of three days' work in a year. I cannot tell you the story of that first grand passion and the delight of it. I had found a library. I like that honest Dutchman, a fine old scholar says, who told me that one page of Plato did him more good than ten humpers of

wine, and that was the way I felt about those 200 volumes. I had found out the unspeakable delight of drinking all my heart could desire, and struck the matchless intoxication of noble and wholesome books, that leave no headache or heartache when you are sober, only it was a good while before I got sober.

Then I came in due time to this new world and began to work again at the anvil in Pennsylvania, my own proper business I expected to follow all my life, and presently heard of a library in the small town of Hathoro, six or seven miles away, six one way and seven the other. A fine old farmer had found a long while ago that this was the noblest use he could make of a good deal of his money, to build up a library away among the rich green lands, and so there it was waiting for me with its treasure of good books. I see them again as they stand on the shelves, and think I could walk right in and lay my hands on those that won me most potently and cast their spell again over my heart, though it is five and thirty years since I was within the doors. I may mention Hawthorne among them all as the author I found there for the first time who won my heart for good and all, as we may say, and holds it still. Then I found a great treasure in no long time in Philadelphia, that I could no more exhaust than you can exhaust the spring we have been glancing at by drinking, which dips down toward the deepness of the world. I was still bound fast to the anvil, for this was our living, but there was my life, so far as good books could make it, rich for me and noble in the great library again seven miles away. So what matter about the hard day's work at the anvil, while there was some new volume to read when the day's work was done or old one to read with an ever new delight. My new book or old one, with the sweet green lane in the summer time where I could walk while the birds sang their mating song, and the fragrance of the green things growing floated on the soft summer air, and the fireside in winter with the good wife busy about the room, and the little ones sleeping in their cribs, I look back to those times still and wonder whether they were not the best I ever knew. I was reading some lines the other day in an old English ballad written 300 years ago, and they told the story of those times:

"O for a booke, and a shadie nook, eyther indoore, or out,  
With the green leaves whisp'ring overhede, or the streete cries  
all about,

Where I maie reade, all at my ease, both of the New and Olde,  
For a right good Booke, whereon to looke, was better to me  
than Golde."

And so I touch the story of my own life for some poor evidence of what good books can do for us and for the worth of what you have been doing in Spencer all these years, and are made glad to day by this library building which crowns the good endeavor; a place that will not shame but will glorify your purpose and hold it to the noblest and best endeavors you can make in the time to come, for such a shrine will be sure to draw books to it always, worthy of its beauty and grace, and there will be other men and women also to follow in the steps of Richard Sugden, and bring to it costly works and rare and beautiful, worthy to be in the palaces of kings while still you will see to it that the noble provision of books for the general reading rests directly as it has done so long on your own generous care.

You have made this noble boon of good books easy and opulent for the workingmen of Spencer. When I came to this new world and had not heard as yet of that library among the green lands, but must have books on any terms, and the terms were hard, and the good wife watching not the dollars but the very cents because they must all be saved to furnish the little home, I can well remember how I bought a book one day for half a dollar, far too big to smuggle into the cottage, and hid it in the bushes, watched my chances the next day, and got it in all safe and sound; and some days after, when she caught me reading, and said, "Where did you get that book, my dear?" I answered, "Why, I have had it for some time"; and then she only said, "Indeed!" for she was patient with me and good; and then, it was in what somebody calls our treacle moon. The workingmen of Spencer fall on happy times. Here are books easy to come at as the water you drink and the air you breathe and stores of them which can never be exhausted. If it had come to pass thirty years ago that some man delving in your wild hills had struck gold, and all the eager manhood of New England had gone crazy to delve for gold where Spencer stands, and had found it in mighty stores, I wonder whether that would have been such a boon to Spencer and the world as this you have done—establishing great industries and wholesome and good; beckoning the working forces from

far and wide to come here and take hold with you on such terms as we can find nowhere else outside this new world. Brother McGlynn, I remember, as we rode together to the funeral of Gen. Grant, called out some half-dozen times, "God's world for the workingman!" You did this who were the pioneers of the strong and steadfast town, and then you said, We must have a free public library, and pay the bills; we have got our churches started, and our schools, and our place for town-meeting—the tap-root of the tree of liberty in New England, a living tree, and no mere liberty-pole, and reaching down 200 years—now we must complete the walls of the city, which standeth four-square, by a free public library, and so do what men may to maintain a fair public virtue and intelligence within the lines of Spencer; these men we employ shall have books to read of every kind any man ought to read, and the ought shall be large and free and fair; and so the thing was done.

The thirty years have come and gone; the free public library has done its noble and beautiful work. It is a new departure we touch to-day in this ceremony of gift and acceptance. This library will grow always more worthy the name your friend and neighbor has made for it from this time. They say that in Scotland once a man sent for his minister and said, "If I give £20,000 to the church do you think it will be reckoned in my account when I get through down here?" And the minister said: "I do not feel sure about that; but it is weel worth the experiment." I do feel sure about this, and the worth of what you can do, to be placed to your credit, not yonder but right here in the town of Spencer. There can be no nobler investment, and but few as noble as this you have made these thirty years for all who have the hunger and thirst in them good books can satisfy; while still with poor Oliver in the story, we ask for more; and they are not dead things, as Milton says, but contain a potency of life as active as the soul from which they sprang:

"Books are each a world; and those we know  
Are a substantial world both pure and good;  
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

And books are yours  
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies  
Preserved from age to age; more precious far  
Than that accumulated store of gold  
And orient gems, which for a day of need  
The Sultans hide deep in ancestral vaults.  
These stores of truth you can unlock at will."

## BOOKS AND LIFE

The influence of books on the community has been used in this address by Dean (now President) Birge as a basis for discussing their reaction on special groups, especially those differentiated by age and sex, and how far the library should be guided by it and take advantage of it. It is perhaps the best general treatment of the group features of socialized library work by a speaker of authority, not a professional librarian.

Edward Asahel Birge was born at Troy, N. Y., Sept. 7, 1851, graduated at Williams in 1873 and since 1875 has been a member of the University of Wisconsin faculty, serving successively as instructor in natural history, professor of zoology, dean of the college of arts and sciences, acting president, and finally in 1919, president of the University. He has also served as a director of the Free Library at Madison, and in 1906 was president of the Wisconsin Library Association, before whom this address was delivered.

The aspect of the subject to which I would call your attention is the often observed fact of the extent to which modern life in all of its phases, is becoming based upon books. I say in all of its phases, for we are concerned with the present extent of this relation between books and life with its rapid increase, rather than with its existence. Ever since the beginning of human society men have based their actions on the teachings of experience. Part of these teachings each individual has directly derived from his environment, and he has supplemented and enlarged them by means of those coming from the remembered experience of others, often belonging to an older generation. Later in

history there were added those teachings derived from books—from the recorded experience of others. With that enlargement of the basis of human action which comes from the remembered experience of others we, as librarians, have nothing to do, and, indeed, there is little to say about it now which could not have been said with equal propriety, one, two, or twenty centuries ago. With books the case is different. The last century, the last generation, the last decade—each has seen the transfer of the basis of action from the oral to the printed word, which could be paralleled by no other period of equal length in the history of civilization. The story of this transfer from talk to print, from rule of thumb to textbook, from tradition to school, from practise to science, is long and intensely interesting. I can touch only a few phases of it.

First consider the lengthening of the school period for children. I do not think it is possible accurately to compare the present length of this period with that which existed a century or a half ago; nor would such a comparison interest us. It is enough for our purpose to know that years have been added to the school life of many thousands of the youth of all classes. As a single illustration, consider the effect of the high school, whose development into a large and popular institution, an institution affecting great masses of the people, belongs almost wholly to the period within the life of the generation now on the stage. A half century ago the public high school was almost unknown and the private academy reached very few persons. Only a generation ago the number of students in secondary schools was hardly one-tenth of the present number. The attendance on institutions of secondary grade has thus increased five times as rapidly as the population. Within the past fifteen years the attendance in the high schools of Milwaukee has more than trebled, while only a little more than fifty per cent. has been added to the population of the city. In Racine almost exactly the same ratio holds, and so for many other cities of the United States, the increase being least marked in New England cities, and greatest in the cities of the West. \*

The formative influence of the high school youth are far more extensively and exclusively books than were those



of his father or grandfather, who probably began to learn his trade, or his business, at about the age when his boy enters the high school, and who therefore, during the period of adolescence, received his training from action rather than from study, from oral rather than from printed experience.

One may find to-day in the writings of many teachers jeremiads over the shortness of the average school life of children. I would not contradict their statistics and would join in their regrets, but the fact remains that the most striking phenomenon in the life of the children of the past thirty years is the extent to which their training has been committed to the use of books and the rapid growth of the use of books as the period has advanced. Few as the school years of the children now are, those of any older generation have been fewer. This aspect of the matter is the one that is of interest to us, and the school life of the present, instead of arousing our regrets by its brevity, may well call out our astonishment by its length, and demand the use of our best wits to see the changes which have been caused in the life of the present and to forecast those which in the future will flow from this fundamental change in education.

One of these correlated changes is already apparent—the extension of the period of book learning for many thousands of persons into the college and university course.

In 1850 the total attendance on colleges in the United States was about ten thousand. Half a century later, when the population of the country had increased about three and one-third times, the college students had increased in a tenfold ratio, or more than three times as rapidly as the population. Even more significant is the growth of the number of college students in more recent years. Since 1889 the number has more than doubled, thus continuing in the latest years a ratio of growth with reference to population quite as great as in earlier years.

An equally significant, and quite as conspicuous change, is seen in the growth of technical education. Thirty years ago, when I came to Wisconsin, the university was graduating from two or three and a half dozen engineers yearly, and these could not all find occupation in this commonwealth, with a population then of more than a million peo-

ple. Now a hundred graduates go out at Commencement, while the population of the state has little more than doubled, and while other engineering schools of high rank have multiplied all around it.

Nowadays the man of books, rather than the man of tradition is directing the work of the world. In the copper mines of the north the old-fashioned mine captain, who received his profession and his traditions from his father, is disappearing and has almost vanished. His place is taken by the graduate of a mining school, who interprets what he sees, not by the light of the experience of his elders, communicated to him orally, but by the far clearer light of the collective experience of men embodied in books.

When the capitalist now desires to explore for new iron mines he employs not the old-fashioned prospector, but puts into the field a party of young men often fresh from the geological laboratory. Thus science, organized knowledge, book learning, is driving out with increasing rapidity the picturesque figures of past times—times wholly past, though only just behind us in years. That "bookish theoric," so detested by Iago, is apparently firmly in control of affairs and has displaced its predecessors and rivals.

In countless other ways the same fact is shown. Half a century ago a youth who desired to become a lawyer or a doctor entered the office of a practitioner and learned his profession by practise and experience. Now he goes to the school of law or medicine and gains his entrance to his chosen calling by the way of books and laboratories. Even commerce and trade, in which the rules of practical experience seem most firmly entrenched, are shifting their basis to books, and schools of commerce and trade schools are springing up on every hand to give youth a broader foundation of knowledge than can be gained from practise. Still more significant are the facts shown by the enormous development of agricultural experiment stations, farmers' bulletins and farmers' institutes. Agriculture, that calling which of all others is most ancient and most conservative, is rapidly changing its basis from tradition to books. Perhaps I ought not to say "most conservative," for there is one calling which may better deserve the title—that of the domestic industries practised by women. Yet

even here a beginning of the transfer, although a small one, has been made by schools of domestic science.

While this beginning is but small, and while the traditional professions of women have not yet been greatly modified by books, the life of no class of the community has been more profoundly affected by this general change than has that of women. With the passing away of home industries and with the great increase of wealth which the past century, or half century, has seen, have come vastly increased opportunities to women for leisure, for release from domestic duties, and for the prolongation of school life. The statistics of high schools and colleges sufficiently show the use which they are making of this leisure. Other facts are equally obvious and significant as showing the transfer of the basis of woman's life from domestic experience to books. The woman's club, I suppose, may be said fairly to take the place of the sewing circle of our mothers and grandmothers. The contrast even in the name is significant, as marking the transfer of interest from the circle of domestic experience to the wider domain of the recorded life of the world, to the realm of books.

Thus at whatever point we examine the life of the present, we find it basing itself on books, both for action and enjoyment, and that in an ever-increasing degree. This truth is peculiarly evident to you as librarians, since the facts of your own profession and the rapid growth of libraries and library work afford one of the latest phases of this general movement.

From 1875 to 1896 the number of libraries in the United States just about doubled, increasing steadily, and adding, during this period, about 2,000 libraries, or a little less than 100 per year. From 1896 to 1900, 1,350 libraries were added, or about 450 per year. From 1900 to 1903, 1,500 libraries were founded, or 500 per year. In the past ten years the number of libraries must have doubled; a ratio growth at least four times that of the population. . . .

It is plain that the adjustment of the library to this movement of men's minds towards books is the most important practical question for all of us. Questions of management, of administration, of methods are all of secondary importance beside this one—if, indeed they may be called

even secondary. For this change of base is a revolutionary affair, not a mere matter of readjustment of detail, and it is no easy task for the library to find itself in such a movement. Libraries are so small a part of the national intellectual life, so small, in the mass, for example, in comparison to the great universities, that their proper influence and work are easily overlooked. There is sometimes danger that they may be swept into currents guided by other forces rather than find opportunity freely to contribute their own share to the movement.

Let us turn then to the more practical side of the question, and ask how the library is adjusting itself, in this changed relation of men, where it has best succeeded, and where it still has most to do. Let us ask where experience seems to promise successful solution of problems, and where the problems are in that stage in which only doubtful success can be expected from experiments, and final solution still lies far before us.

The library began as a place to keep books, permitting their use by the public, but often under such restrictions as seem to indicate that this service was granted "grudgingly and of necessity." Books and the high life were in some obscure way correlated in the mind of the librarian, and he too often seemed to feel that these were treasures not to be shared by the many. The first change which came, therefore, as the library was swept into the general intellectual current of time, was the removal of restrictions on the use of books and their replacement by devices intended to encourage and extend that use. A second step, and a much more revolutionary one, has been to teach the community directly the uses of books, and thus not merely to afford easy conditions for the use of books on the part of those who want them, but to add a positive force which will compel the books to go out in the community, there to perform their present service and to create a demand for an increased service in the future.

This change marks a fundamental departure of the library from its old basis, and one which will affect it greatly, for good and perhaps for ill. The movement toward freedom of administration was really concerned with small matters, and left unaltered the central plan and purpose of the

library. But with the assumption of direct educational work for children, for women, for men, the library has entered upon a new epoch in its evolution. It has taken up duties whose performance will demand greatly enlarged resources—of space and of money, of books and of working staff. And what is of even greater importance, the purpose, the point of view, of those who control the library, and the temper of the administration, will change, and ought to change, under the pressure of these new duties.

This positive and educational library work falls into two main types—that for children, and that for adults—both men and women. It is still in a tentative condition, in a formative and experimental period. The results are still so few and recent that they do not admit any exact formulation. They permit only general and suggestive statement.

Work for children is, in some ways, the easiest educational attempt of the library, since it runs parallel to the work of the schools, and those for whom the work is done are easily reached and easily guided. Its function is, of course, in part to supplement the school. It would be, however, a great misfortune if it were looked upon merely as a supplement to the school, as a means of providing reading which the school ought to buy, but cannot afford. Its purpose is rather to begin in childhood, both for pleasure and for profit, a voluntary association with books which lie wholly outside of the school program. It aims to begin the early formation of the habit of reading as distinguished from study—a habit which will be permanent, instead of ending with the period of formal instruction. It recognizes the fact that school life must soon end, and that when the end comes, the important feature of the child's intellectual condition is not so much the amount he has learned as the temper and habit of his mind toward books. Has he merely learned certain truths from books or are books open to him? It is of fundamental importance to the community that the second alternative be secured. The school libraries and children's librarians are, therefore, not to feel that their duty is to supplement the school. That duty lies on a different, and, in a way, a higher plane, in a more spiritual region. It is their part to make the child a citizen of the world of books, and to naturalize him so



thoroughly that he will always remain a citizen. Thus only can he share fully, not only in the high and permanent pleasures that books afford, but also in that great movement of life toward books which marks our time.

From remarks which I have heard on various occasions, I believe this extension of library service and library duties to youth has often been misunderstood. Work with school children, whether done by the library force as part of their duties, or by assistants especially engaged, has seemed to many to be a somewhat unnecessary extension of the library—something of a luxury. These added duties have often been assumed by the libraries under special pleas, and for reasons temporary in character. But in that wider view which I am trying to present, the truth is recognized that the library is a permanent storehouse of books for the community, to which the citizen of every class and age must repair for knowledge not only interesting and useful but necessary to the conduct of life. We recognize also that while the training of the schools soon ceases for every individual, the service of the library extends throughout life. We assert also that the possibilities of this service must be taught to the members of the community from childhood, and that the efficiency of the books will largely depend on the efficiency with which this teaching is done.

Especial care must be taken with children and youth toward the end of the ordinary school periods—in the upper grades and in the high school. Here it is that the transition to independent reading must come. The children's room must not be merely an appendage to the kindergarten and primary school, but the library must supply to youth of all ages not only books, but inspiration in reading. The questions which arise in work for children are many and often perplexing, but if these general principles are accepted, they are, after all, questions of detail rather than of principle.

The library's influence over women has been the greatest in extent and productive of the largest results; so much so that, in the opinion of many critics of the public library, that institution is in danger of becoming "feminized." I shall not attempt to discuss so large a subject as that indicated by this fearful word, but it may not be unprofitable to touch upon the causes which have given the work of the library for women at



once so great an extension and so great a success, as well as some obvious limitations. I should place first among the causes, both for the success and the limitation of this influence, the recent acquisition by women of large opportunities for the intellectual life, their natural conservatism, and their greatly increased leisure as compared with men. That women read books, and read them in enormous numbers, is granted, indeed asserted. That they read seriously I have heard questioned and have always wondered at the doubt. It seems to me rather that they never read in any way except seriously. How many women—reading women, I mean—can put away an unfinished book without a sense of guilt? How many can “browse about” in a library and enjoy doing so? How many really like to read a dictionary or encyclopaedia without ulterior designs upon an article for the women’s club, or, at least, without wanting to know something? These are all tests—unconscious, but none the less excellent—of the real readers, of those to whom books are alive and intimate friends. While I have no statistics at hand, I fear that many women most devoted to libraries would fail to reach this standard. The field of the intellectual life has been widely opened to women so recently that they still feel a certain sense of duty along with the privilege which is granted them in entering it, rather than a complete sense of being at home there. The conservatism of women helps this tendency to read seriously and for general purposes. The traditional use of books as a means of culture appeals to their more conservative mind as it does not to men. They are more easily induced to read for reading’s sake—they are willing to read the books one ought to read. They are moved by considerations of mental improvement independent of any result beyond the improvement itself. The library as a library attracts them. Then, too, the amount of their reading and its character is modified by the fact that women are so much more limited than men in means to pass their leisure. Jerome K. Jérôme (if correctly reported by newspapers) recently pointed out that much so-called reading is no more an intellectual process than is smoking a cigar, and that often we go to books just as to the cigar, to pass the time and to prevent the intrusion of disagreeable thoughts. Of course this is, and ought to be, wholly true, and since with us the cigar is a masculine privilege, the woman must take to books as the man

takes to smoking, and even to drinking. Speaking seriously, the library is to many women a relief from care—the only distraction from the monotony of routine. It is a cheap and easy thing to sneer at this use of books, but we who believe in the friendship of books know that here lies one of the greatest blessings they can give, as it is one of the greatest blessings of true friendship. Nor do we wonder that the uncultivated, or the half-cultivated, often choose their book friends from a class not greatly above their own.

On the other hand, women have hardly begun to use books on lines along which we are seeking to get men to read—in directions connected with their trade or profession. Domestic industries, so far as they are in the hands of women, are still most wholly dependent upon tradition. They are not exposed to competition. Failure or inefficiency does not put the proprietor out of business. Their results are not measured in dollars and cents. In a word, the whole line of motives which is forcing masculine industries over to the basis of books is lacking in the chief feminine occupations. We are now seeing only the feeble beginnings of the attempt thus to transfer them from tradition to science. A long time must pass, and social conditions greatly change, before the transfer is made. Thus women are not forced from general to special lines of reading, while they have greater motive for general reading than have men.

As a result, women are becoming, to a degree without example in the past, the possessors and transmitters of the life of culture. I do not believe that fewer men read good literature than formerly, but the increase in masculine readers of this type has been so much less than the increase in women readers that in comparison the number of men seems to have shrunk greatly. Of course much of this reading by women for culture is desultory and aimless, much is misdirected. But after all deductions are made, it remains true that the knowledge of books seems to be tending to become the possession of women rather than of men. It has always belonged to a certain class of men—not a very large part of the community—and it is still theirs; but its extension to other classes has been along female lines rather than male, and its transmission to the next generation seems only too likely to depend in a large measure upon the female line. College statistics at present show the same

facts. Language, literature, and art are the chosen studies of women. Men turn rather to science, economics, or politics—subjects which, they suppose, bear directly on future plans for life. These great subjects whose main purpose in education is the uplifting of the mind, the widening of the mental horizon without direct reference to any specific line of life—these appeal far more strongly to women than to men, and their influence, in a rapidly increasing degree, will reach the next generation through the mother rather than through the father. It would be a pessimistic view which would say that modern society is coming to depend on the mothers for the accumulation and transmission of culture, while retaining in the male line the function of accumulating and transmitting wealth, though much could be said for the thesis and a very plausible argument could be constructed for it.

If all this is true, it is inevitable that women should use libraries far more than men. It is equally inevitable that in this large use much should be trivial, much customary, much misdirected and unwise. Nature has no means of reaching success except by the rule of natural selection—the old-fashioned plan of “cut-and-try,” and this means much failure along the road of advance. We who see the work of the library from our daily experience know how much it is contributing of culture, how much of happiness, to the life of women, and through them to that of the community.

But men—why do they not use the library, say the critics, and what shall the library do to increase its use by men? You have all read the vigorous article that the *Independent* published on this subject last summer, which, with much of error, contains a good deal of truth in a stimulating form. It presents a subject which must have a somewhat larger treatment.

It ought first to be said that in this and other articles on the topic the terms *women* and *men* are by no means similarly used. The writers are not concerned about men at large—the husbands and brothers of the women who are said to visit the library—the women of comparative leisure, who are seeking information on art, literature, or ancestry, who are trying to get up a paper for the club, or who visit the library for recreation. It is the plumber, the machinist, the grocer, whose absence they deplore, and to whom they think the library ought to give help. Not only so, but it is the plumber, rather than as a

man, whose presence is desired and who is to be aided. The library, says the *Independent* in effect, ought to teach the plumber how to "plumb"; ought to furnish him with information which his boss is unable to give. But this is a new function for libraries, however useful it may be, and a function which libraries do not attempt for women. Dressmakers do not (I speak under correction, but I think I am right) expect to secure at a library a knowledge of how to fit a difficult customer, any more than do tailors. Yet this sort of thing, we are told, the library ought to do for men; and we are told in a tone which implies that here is an obvious duty which only wilful ignorance can overlook.

It ought rather to be recognized that in undertaking this work the public library is entering a new and almost unexplored field of effort, and also that it is trying to extend its influence to classes of the community which it has not hitherto reached, and along lines of knowledge which it has never seriously attempted to follow. In such a work there must be many experiments and many failures, and the positive results will be small for a long time. . . .

The problem for the library, as regards men, is therefore twofold: 1. Can men be induced to visit the library for general purposes, to use it in ways similar to those for which women come to it? 2. How can the wage-earners and handicraftsmen be induced to visit the library and use its books for their practical advantage?

Let us first consider the general question: Can we reach the men? The women come to the libraries, say the critics, in shoals and droves, for all sorts of intellectual purposes, good and bad. You catch the children, they say, in school, when they cannot get away, and indeed are glad of relief from lessons; but the men—can you reach them and affect their lives? In reply we must say at once and frankly that no such large volume of success with men is possible as has been the case with women. The public library came to women at the precise moment when increased education disposed them to use it, and increased leisure gave them the opportunity. It fills a space in their lives which would be otherwise void. But the present time is one of decreased leisure and increased intensity of work for all classes of men. Perhaps I ought to except from this statement the wage-earner, who as eight hour laws and cus-

toms come into force will have more time for reading than the man of almost any other class in the community. This movement toward lessened hours of labor is more effective where libraries are best organized and therefore presents an opportunity for the extension of library influence, both general and special. The opportunity must be improved, yet neither the wage-earner nor the business man will be easy to reach; neither has been among the active patrons of the library in the past. Their lives are already full, both with business and pleasure, and if the library is to reach them, it must attract them on lines which appeal to them more strongly than business or present pleasure. It must reach needs which they know and feel to be real.

I do not believe that men of the present generation will come to libraries in great numbers for the purposes that attract women. We might as well admit that they will not substitute the novel for the cigar, the printed story for the companionship of the club. They will not read good books because they ought to do so, and the number who will read them because they like to do so is unfortunately not great. Men have not thus acted since the world began, and man-like, they will not do so now, even though such conduct on their part would help our library statistics very greatly. Nor will any great number of them read in order to enlarge the basis of life, for, in spite of the greatness of the movement toward books, it affects at first hand only a few people in the community. The mass of workmen, now and always, will get their knowledge from tradition or at second hand. It will be the unusual man who will get his ideas from books at first hand and thus improve his work and that of his fellows.

The problem is then to reach these few, and through them the community; and this brings us to the second phase of the question. I do not find that the problem has been solved; perhaps it is too recent. But libraries have been attempting its solution by various methods and with varying success.

The first and most successful attempt is that of the large libraries, like that of Pittsburgh and the Pratt Institute of Brooklyn, which maintain a technical library for the men—a library adequately housed in its own rooms and administered by a special librarian. These technical libraries for working men succeed in their aim of reaching many of the class for



which they are established. They offer not merely an opportunity for reading, but that guidance in the use of books which all classes of the community need, if they are to use books for a serious purpose. They show us that success in this line of effort may be reached if the library has an income sufficient to enable it to undertake the task on a large scale.

This condition is, however, not that of most of the libraries which are represented here. Our incomes are none too large for the work which we must necessarily do for the general public. Such libraries must ordinarily content themselves with offering to men opportunities for reading without special guidance in the use of books. This work has been attempted in a good many of the smaller libraries. They attempt to provide masculine conditions for reading and reading material which will appeal to men. The first includes a well-furnished, comfortable room for men, where a man can come in his working clothes without feeling he is out of place; smoking may be allowed or not—both plans are tried without great difference in apparent result. The masculine reading comprises newspapers and magazines; good books of literature which can be left in the room (paper bound copies suggested); most important of all are trade journals; if possible, files of the recent volumes of these journals, selected according to the industries of each town; and the most readable and most recent reference books on similar subjects. In a word, a room is furnished with reading which will appeal to the classes of men who do not ordinarily use libraries and who are not greatly interested in literature.

This plan is good one and ought to be tried, but I believe the conditions are exceptional under which it will reach large numbers of men. Inertia and habit will keep most of them away from the library. They will see the daily papers at their wonted places of resort, and the room, necessarily lacking in much of the freedom of the club, will fail to attract very many of them. They will not form the habit of visiting it, even though they might enjoy it if the habit were formed. It must also be remembered that increasing numbers of the manufacturing concerns are providing their employees with reading of this kind, and thus limiting the use of the city library.

In some libraries the attempt to reach men has gone still



further and has led to an inclusion of attractions which are ordinarily regarded as outside the work of a library. They have attempted to combine to some degree the privileges of a club with that of the public library. The Stevens Point Library has a club room, equipped with billiard tables, cards, etc., as well as with technical journals and similar books. This, the librarian reports, is very successful in attracting boys, many of whom learn to use the library. Men, however, do not come in large numbers, as they do not care to use a place frequented by boys, and in which smoking is not permitted. At Wausaukee a special room with games and where lunch is served has been established at the library as a means of furnishing a sort of club room for lumber men who come to the village, especially on Sunday, and who have no other place of resort, except the saloon. How far such methods are advisable as a part of library work is a question which will often be asked during the coming years and which only experience can answer. At present such enterprises have not gone beyond the stage of early experiment.

Summing up the result, I would frankly confess that the reports which I have received are not numerous enough for a positive judgment, yet it is my impression that where there is an income large enough to provide a special librarian and a public large enough to warrant the expense, this movement for special libraries for men is likely to succeed. It seems also to be true that where the library provides the men with the opportunity for reading only, and does not furnish guidance for readers, no very large use is made of technical books and there is no greatly increased use of the library in general. How to guide the reading seems, therefore, to be the central factor in the solution of the problem.

In a small town a special librarian is impossible, for financial reasons, but there, as well as in large cities, lectures can be given which deal with practical subjects and the aid to their knowledge which the library affords. Many cities are giving such courses of lectures, notably perhaps New York, and with considerable effect on the use of the public library. I have no statistics regarding such lectures from the various cities, but undoubtedly this method offers the easiest plan for extending the use of the library in smaller cities and towns. I say the *easiest*, and it will not be difficult to secure good lec-

tures on literature, history, or art, but lectures on the practical subjects are much more difficult to obtain, since it is hard to secure lecturers who know more about the trades than do the craftsmen who constitute the audience.

If these movements are to succeed, they must not be attempted in an amateurish way. They must be well planned and well executed—planned and executed with careful reference to the wants of the men of the community. Above all, they must be persistently carried out with full vigor year after year, even though results are apparently small. Their purpose must be steadfastly maintained and the methods of execution continually readjusted, as success or failure indicates. It is no light or easy thing to change the habits of half the adult members of the community—to cultivate the reading habit in those who have reached maturity without acquiring it—and the work which the library proposes for itself involves such a task.

If men are to be reached at all it must be on a business basis, not on that of occasional effort. Nor must the missionary spirit prevail, for men, as a rule, do not wish to be reformed or to be helped. They must find in the library a place which appeals to their sense of comfort and which gives them things that they want, or, like other sensible people, they will not use it.

One word in closing this topic, and that in emphasis of what I have already said. It is easier to keep a boy reading as he grows up than to catch him again as a man after the library has lost him. Take a lesson from the church. The boy who graduates from Sunday-school rarely returns for a post-graduate course. In the wise administration of the work for children and youth lies the main hope not of reaching, but keeping men in the library.

But it should be definitely understood that this enlargement of library work which the times are forcing upon us means increasing expense, more room, more books—which must be more frequently renewed—and a larger library staff. It means the attempt to do efficiently several lines of intellectual work for the public instead of purveying literature for those who desire it. This new work the library can readily accomplish, but not with the staff which was sufficient for the old duties. Any library can provide, for example, the list of desid-

erata mentioned in the *Independent's* article, which could easily be extended. They can all be furnished by the library as the public wants them and will pay for them. They cannot be, and ought not to be, supplied by an already overworked library staff of two or three persons.

The library, therefore, should not enter upon these duties blindly or ignorantly. It is a great task which is thus undertaken—to educate the community to use books and to guide it in that use. Although small beginnings are possible, the work will inevitably grow on our hands just as that of the schools and colleges has done, and for similar reasons. But whatever difficulties lie in the way of their performance, it is plain that the library must assume these new duties. With many experiments, with many failures, with many partial successes, the library will extend its teachings, its conscious influences, until they touch the life of the community at every point.

In this rambling talk I have discussed library work as it looks forward to new problems, and have devoted only a word, and that perhaps a rather disparaging one, to the traditional use of the library. I would not leave the subject in this way. For the traditional use of books remains and will remain the center of library work and the main source of its best influences. The problem of the library to-day, looked at from within and not from without, and in relation to other agencies, is essentially that which confronts the university. Both institutions once stood for culture and for culture exclusively. Both are now challenged by the spirit of the newer time and are called upon to justify themselves as public utilities. This they must do, and that in full measure, but there is a real danger that both, in the multiplicity of the new duties thus forced upon them, may forget the weighty words, "these ought ye to do and not leave the other undone." For, after all, the highest public utility which the library offers, or can offer, is the opportunity to cultivate the friendship of books. This utility is none the less precious because it is intangible. Indeed, it is the unique privilege of the library among municipal enterprises that it can provide a service which aids the higher life of the citizen so directly and so purely. In the spirituality of this function, the library stands second only to the highest institutions of pure learning, and to the church.

No new undertaking, no extension of work, no plea of necessity can warrant or justify any loss of power on this highest level. The problem is not to discover how to sacrifice as little as possible of the old spirit to the new duties, but to learn how through the new duties we may make more widespread and more potent for good that oldest and best inheritance from the past—the love of books.

"The people's university," the library has been called, but it would be as great a pity if the librarian so understood this term as to believe that people came to the library only to learn, as it would be if any went there who could not learn what they sought. That university which is a place to study rather than a place to live is missing its best possibilities, and in a similar way the library ought to be, first and always, a place to read rather than a place to study. I would not go so far as to say that I want to find it a place to "loaf," though I might be provoked into saying so; but certainly it must be a place where I can "invite my soul"—such a place as the world gives me elsewhere only in the church or in the silence of nature. Trade journals and technical works are of great use; books for women's clubs are good things; the children's room is a necessity; but these of themselves no more make a library than a kitchen, dining room and bedroom make a home. Out of such utilities as these you may get a boarding house, but nothing better; the family makes it a home. Those are wholly wrong who believe that standard books are so cheap that anyone can buy them, and therefore the library could conceivably get on without them. Without the best literature you might get a very useful institution, no doubt, but not a library, for in a library the great works of the great authors are the soul and theirs is the spirit which enables the library not merely to contribute to the advance of the community toward prosperity and intelligence, but also, in some degree, to touch its higher life to finer issues.

## THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

### AN ADDRESS AT ITS DEDICATION

This and the four addresses that follow it have little in common except that all were delivered at the opening exercises of libraries. Everett's address at the opening of the Boston Public Library appropriately heads the group. The reader will look in it in vain for any reflection of the conservative opinions expressed in the letter to George Ticknor printed on page 53 of this volume, unless perhaps in the total absence of anything radical. It is typical oratory of the day—ponderously graceful, if that is not a contradiction in terms.

Edward Everett was born in Dorchester, Mass., April 11, 1794. He graduated at Harvard in 1811 and served there as professor of Greek in 1819-25. He was a member of Congress in 1825-35, governor of Massachusetts in 1836-40, minister to Great Britain in 1841-45, president of Harvard, 1846-49, U. S. secretary of state in 1852-53, and U. S. senator in 1853-54. He died in Boston, Jan. 15, 1865. His reputation as a scholarly orator was very high.

MR. MAYOR:—

In behalf of the Trustees of the City Library, I receive with extreme pleasure the keys which you have placed in my hands. The completion of the noble building, which the city government now confides to our care, is an event to which the Trustees have looked forward with the greatest interest, and which they now contemplate with the highest satisfaction. They deem themselves especially honored in their connection with an institution, for whose use this stately and commodious edifice has

been erected, and which they doubt not is destined to be instrumental of the highest good to the community, and to reflect lasting credit upon the liberality, public and private, with which it has been founded and endowed.

The city of Boston, owing to peculiar circumstances in its growth and history, has been at all times, as I think, beyond most cities in the world, the object of an affectionate attachment on the part of its inhabitants; a feeling entitled to respect and productive of good, even if it may sometimes seem to strangers over-partial in its manifestations. It is not merely its commanding natural situation, the triple hills on which it is enthroned, its magnificent bay and harbor, and the group of islands and islets that sparkle like emeralds on their surface; not merely this most admirable common, which opens before our windows, delightful even at this season of the year, and affording us in summer, in its noble malls and shady walks, all that the country can boast of cool and beautiful and salubrious, transported to the heart of the city, "the poor man's pleasure-ground," as it has been well called, though a king might envy it;—nor the environs of our city of surpassing loveliness, which enclose it on every side in kindly embrace; it is not solely nor principally these natural attractions which endear Boston to its citizens. Nor is it exclusively the proud and grateful memories of the past,—of the high-souled fathers and mothers of the land, venerable in their self-denying virtues, majestic in the austere simplicity of their manners, conscientious in their errors, who, with amazing sacrifices and hardships never to be described, sought out new homes in the wilderness, and transmitted to us delights and blessings which it was not given to themselves to enjoy;—of those who in succeeding generations deserved well of their country,—the pioneers of the Revolution, the men of the stamp act age, whose own words and acts are stamped on the pages of history, in characters never to be effaced;—of those who, when the decisive hour came, stood forth in that immortal HALL, the champions of their country's rights, while it scarcely yet deserved the name of a country; it is not exclusively these proud and grateful associations, which attach the dutiful Bostonian to the city of his birth or adoption.

No, Mr. Mayor, it is not exclusively these, much as they contribute to strengthen the sentiment. It has its origin, in no small degree, in the personal relation in which Boston places



herself to her children; in the parental interest which she cherishes in their welfare, which leads her to take them by the hand almost from the cradle,—to train them up in the ascending series of her excellent free schools; watching over them as, a fond father watches over the objects of his love and hope; in a word, to confer upon them a first-rate school education at the public expense. Often have I attempted, but with very partial success, both in this country and in Europe, to persuade inquiring friends from the countries and places where no such well-organized system of public education prevails, that our free schools do really afford to the entire population means of elementary education, of which the wealthiest citizen is glad to avail himself.

And now, Mr. Mayor, the enlightened counsels of the city government are about to give new strength to those ties of gratitude and affection, which bind the hearts of the children of Boston to their beloved city. Hitherto the system of public education, excellent as it is and wisely supported by a princely expenditure, does but commence the work of instruction and carry it to a certain point; well advanced, indeed, but far short of the goal. It prepares our young men for college, for the counting-room, for the office of the engineer, the *studio* of the artist, the shop of the artisan, the laboratory of the chemist, or whatever field of employment they may be destined to enter, but there it leaves them, without further provision for the culture of the mind. It disciplines the faculties and forms a taste for the acquisition of knowledge, on the part of our young men and women, but it provides no means for their exercise and gratification. It gives them the elementary education requisite for their future callings, but withholds all facilities of access to those boundless stores of recorded knowledge, in every department, by which alone that elementary education can be completed and made effectual for the active duties of life.

But to-day our honored city carries on and perfects her work. The trustees, from their first annual report to the present time, have never failed to recommend a first class public library, such as that, sir, for whose accommodation you destine this noble building, as the completion of the great system of public education. Its object is to give to the entire population, not merely to the curious student, but to the inquisitive member of either of the professions, to the intelligent merchant, mechanic,

machinist, engineer, artist or artisan, in short, to all of every age and of either sex, who desire to investigate any subject, either of utility or taste, those advantages which, without such an ample public collection, must necessarily be monopolized by the proprietors of large private libraries, or those who by courtesy have the use of them; nay, to put within the reach of the entire community advantages of this kind, far beyond those which can be afforded by the largest and best provided private libraries.

The trustees are anxious that the institution, whose prosperity they have so much at heart, should continue to be viewed in this light; as one more added to the school-houses of the city, at which Boston boys and girls, when they have outgrown the other schools, will come to carry on the education which has been there commenced; where Boston men and women, "children of a larger growth," may come to acquire that additional knowledge which is requisite for the most successful discharge of the duties of the various callings of society,—which opens, in its pursuit, the purest sources of happiness,—and which, without reference to utility, contributes so materially to the grace and ornament of life.

I am aware that there is still floating about in the community a vague prejudice against what is called book-learning. One sometimes hears doubts expressed of the utility of public libraries; opinions that they are rather ornamental than necessary or useful; and the fact that our time-honored city, never indifferent to the mental improvement of her children, has existed more than two centuries without one, is a sufficient proof, that, until within a very few years, their importance has not been practically felt. There is perhaps even now a disposition to claim some superiority for what is called practical knowledge—knowledge gained by observation and experience (which most certainly the trustees would not disparage), and a kind of satisfaction felt in holding up the example of self-taught men, in supposed contradistinction from those who have got their knowledge from books. No name perhaps is so frequently mentioned for this purpose as that of Franklin, who, because he had scarce any school education and never went to college, has been hastily set down as a brilliant example to show the inutility of book-learning. It has been quoted to me in this way, and to show that libraries are of no use, within three days.

Now, Mr. Mayor, I need not tell you that there never was

a greater mistake in point of fact. A thirst for books, which he spared no pains to allay, is the first marked trait disclosed in the character of Franklin; his success throughout the early period of his life can be directly traced to the use he made of them; and his very first important movement for the benefit of his fellow-men was to found a public library, which still flourishes;—one of the most considerable in the country. Franklin not a book-man! whoever labors under that delusion, shows that somebody else is not a book-man, at least so far as concerns the biography of our illustrious townsman. We happen to have a little information on that subject, in a book written by Franklin himself. He there gives a very different account of himself, and I would ask any one who entertains the idea to which I am alluding, at what period of Franklin's career he supposes this taste for books began to be manifested by him; how soon he ceased to be a self-formed man? Perhaps after he had struggled through the years of his youthful poverty, escaped to Philadelphia, set up in business as a printer, and begun to have a little money in his pocket. I need not tell you, sir, that it was earlier than that. Was it, then, while he was the clever apprentice to his brother, the editor of a journal, and wrote articles for its columns in a disguised hand, and tucked them under the office door, enjoying the exquisite delight of being ordered to set up his own anonymous articles; was it then, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, that this fondness for reading, under the stimulus of boyish authorship, disclosed itself? Earlier than that. Well, then, at the grammar-school and Master Brownwell's writing-school, which he attended from eight to ten (for there are boys who show a fondness for reading, even at that tender age); was little Benjamin's taste for books developed while yet at school? Earlier than that. Hear his own words, which you will permit me to read from that exquisite piece of autobiography to which I have already alluded: "From my INFANCY I was *passionately* fond of reading, and all the money that came into my hands was laid out in purchasing books. I was very fond of voyages. My first acquisition was Bunyan's works, in separate little volumes. I afterwards sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's *Historical Collections*. They were small chapman's books and cheap, forty volumes in all. My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read. I have often regretted

[and this is a sentence that might be inscribed on the lofty cornice of this noble hall] that at a time when I had such a thirst for knowledge, more proper books had not fallen in my way. . . . There was among them Plutarch's *Lives*, which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of Defoe's, called an *Essay on Projects*, and another of Dr. Mather's, called an *Essay to do Good*, which"—did what, sir? For I am now going to give you, in Franklin's own words (they carry with them the justification of every dollar expended in raising these walls), the original secret of his illustrious career—what was the effect produced by reading these two little books of Defoe and Cotton Mather? "they perhaps gave me a turn of thinking, which had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life." Yes, sir, in the reading of those books was the acorn that sprouted into that magnificent oak; there was the fountain-drop which a fairy might have sipped from a buttercup, from which has flowed the Missouri and the Mississippi,—the broad, deep river of Franklin's fame, winding its way through the lapse of ages, and destined to flow on, till it shall be ingulfed in the ocean of eternity.

From his "infancy," sir, "passionately fond of reading," nay, with the appetite of a vulture, with the digestion of an ostrich, attacking the great folios of polemic divinity in his father's library. Not a dull boy, either; not a precocious little bookworm; fond of play; doesn't dislike a little mischief; sometimes, as he tells us, "led the other boys into scrapes;" but in his intervals of play, in his leisure moments, up in the lonely garret when the rest of the family were asleep, holding converse in his childhood with the grave old non-conformists, Howe and Owen and Flavel and Baxter,—communing with the austere lords of thought; the demigods of puritanism.

Franklin not a book-man? Why, he goes on to tell us that it was "this bookish inclination which at length determined his father to make him a printer," against his own inclination, which was for the sea; and when he had thus by constraint become a printer, his great consolation was, as he says, that "I now had access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my chamber reading the greatest part of the night, when the book

was borrowed in the evening and was to be returned in the morning, lest it should be found missing."

Then he made the acquaintance of Mr. Matthew Adams, an ingenious, sensible man, "who had a pretty collection of books." He frequented the printing-office, took notice of the bright little apprentice, and "very kindly proposed to lend me such books as I chose to read." Having taken to a vegetable diet at the age of sixteen, he persuaded his brother to allow him in cash half the price of his board,—lived upon potatoes and hasty pudding,—soon found that he could save half even of that little allowance (which could not have exceeded two-and-six-pence a week, lawful money), and this poor little economy "was an additional fund for buying books." What would the poor, underfed boy, who was glad to buy books on the savings of his potato diet, have said could he have had free access to a hall like this, stored as it soon will be with its priceless treasures?

Further, sir, while working as a journeyman in England, he says, "I made the acquaintance of one William Wilcox, a bookseller, whose shop was next door. He had an immense collection of second-hand books."—(Somewhat, I suppose, like our friend Burnham, in Cornhill.)—"Circulating libraries were not then in use, but we agreed that on certain reasonable terms, which I have now forgotten, I might take, read, and return any of his works. This I esteemed a great advantage, and I made as much use of it as I could."

Finally, sir, as I have already said, Franklin's first important movement for the good of his fellow-men was the foundation of the public library in Philadelphia. At his instance, the members of a little club to which he belonged, tradesmen and mechanics of narrow means, threw into common stock the few books which belonged to them. A subscription was then obtained from fifty young men, principally tradesmen, of two pounds each, and ten shillings *per annum*, and with this little fund they began. "The books were imported, the library was opened one day in the week for lending them to the subscribers, on their promissory notes to pay double the value if not duly returned." "This was the mother," says Franklin, "of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It has become a great thing itself, and continually goes on increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as in-



telligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and, perhaps, have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defence of their privileges."

Those are the words of Franklin, Mr. Mayor, which I read from his own book. Our excellent friend the President of the Commissioners (Hon. R. C. Winthrop) has justly felicitated himself on having been the first person publicly to raise his voice in this noble hall. He must be a happier man than I who can speak an earlier or an abler word than his on any occasion; but I claim the credit of having read from the first book opened in this hall;—and what is more, sir, I mean to have the satisfaction of presenting the first volume given to the library, since this building came into the care of the Trustees. In your presence, Mr. Mayor, and that of this vast assembly on this first of January, 1858, I offer this copy of Franklin's Autobiography in Sparks's edition, as a New Year's gift to the Boston Public Library. Nay, sir, I am going to do more, and make the first, and perhaps the last, motion ever made in this hall; and that is, that every person present, of his own accord, if of age,—with the consent of parent or guardian, if a minor,—man, woman, boy, or girl, be requested, on going home, to select one good book, and in memory of the poor boy, who half-fed himself to gratify his taste for reading, present it as a New-Year's gift to the Boston Public Library. I make you that motion, Mr. Mayor, and I call upon all present to give me their voices: especially I ask the cooperation of the fairer and better part of creation. If nowhere else, woman's rights shall be respected in this hall, while I have anything to do with it. I pray you, Mr. Mayor, put the question, and then I'll finish my speech.

His Honor the Mayor then rose and stated the question, which was seconded by Mr. Winthrop. The mayor particularly called on the ladies to vote, and a unanimous and emphatic aye resounded through the vast hall. The negative was then called and no response made. His Honor, amidst great cheering and laughter, pronounced it a unanimous vote. Mr. Everett resumed—

No, sir, if there is one lesson more than another directly deducible from the life of Franklin, it is the close connection of a thoroughly practical and useful life and career with books, libraries, and reading. If there is a thing on earth which would have gladdened his heart could he have anticipated it, it would be the knowledge that his native city, in two generations after his death, would found a library like this, to give to the rising



generation and to the lovers of knowledge of every age that access to books, of which he so much felt the want. And could it be granted to him, even now, to return to his native city, which dwelt in his affections to the close of his life, his first visit would be to the centre of the ancient burial-ground, where in after-life he dutifully placed a marble slab on the graves of his parents; his second visit would be to the spot in Milk street where he was born; his third to the corner of Union street and Hanover street, where he passed his childhood, in a house still standing; his fourth visit would be to the site of the free grammar school-house, where, as he says in his will, he received "his first instruction in literature," and which is now adorned with a statue which a grateful posterity has dedicated to his memory; and his last and longest would be to this noble hall, where you are making provision for an ample supply of that reading of which, "from his *infancy* he was *passionately* fond." The trustees have done what they could to connect some reference to Franklin with an institution which would have been the object of his warmest affections, by providing that every Franklin medal boy shall be entitled to its privileges; and inasmuch as the accumulating fund which he bequeathed to the city, and which now exceeds seventy thousand dollars, has proved almost wholly unavailing for the primary object of the bequest, it deserves consideration whether, when it has reached a sufficient magnitude, as it will before the end of this century, the interest of the fund, if it can be legally done, might not advantageously be appropriated, as a permanent endowment for the support of the library.

I have not proposed at this time, sir, on the part of the trustees, to make a formal speech; I have preferred to let Benjamin Franklin speak for us. This day belongs of right to the commissioners for building the library, ably represented as they are, by our distinguished friend their president, who has done such ample justice to the subject; and to you, Mr. Mayor, as the organ of the city government, whom I cannot but congratulate on closing your official career,—in all respects so honorable to yourself and so acceptable to your fellow-citizens,—by an act, I am sure, most grateful to your own feelings and most auspicious of the public good. It is not yet the time for the trustees to speak. A more fitting opportunity may hereafter present itself, when the books shall be placed on the shelves, the catalogue printed, and the library opened for public use. Occasion may

then, perhaps, with propriety be taken, to illustrate the importance and utility of such an institution; to do justice to the liberality on the part of the city government and the individual benefactors by which it has been founded, endowed, and sustained; and especially to the generosity of our greatest benefactor and esteemed fellow-countryman, Mr. Bates, whose letters announcing his first munificent donation of fifty thousand dollars, alluding to his own early want of access to books, assign that as the moving cause which prompted his liberality. It will be the pleasing duty of those who may then be intrusted with the administration of the library, to pay a fitting tribute to so much public and private bounty.

In the mean time, sir, we must throw ourselves on the patience and considerateness of the city council and the community. Not much short of sixty thousand volumes are to be brought together from four different places of temporary deposit, and assigned to their final resting-places in this hall and the circulating library below. Here they are to be arranged on the shelves, the cards and slips which pertain to them, far more numerous than the volumes themselves, reduced to alphabetical order; a separate catalogue of each alcove prepared; and a comprehensive catalogue of the whole collection, without which it will be little better than an unmanageable mass, prepared and printed. Every thing which could be done beforehand, has been anticipated; but much of the work was of necessity reserved till the books should be placed on the shelves. In the interval, and while this labor is going on, the library in Mason street will be left in possession of the books most in request for daily circulation, and will be closed at last only when it becomes absolutely necessary that they also should be removed to the new building.

But it is time for me to conclude. The shades of evening are falling around us; those cressets which lend us their mild and tasteful illumination will soon be extinguished; and the first day of the New-Year, rich in the happy prospects we now inaugurate, will come to a close. May the blessing of Heaven give effect to its brightest anticipations. A few more days,—a few more years,—will follow their appointed round, and we, who now exchange our congratulations on this magnificent New-Year's gift of our city fathers, shall have passed from the scene; but firm in the faith that the growth of knowledge is the growth of sound principles and pure morals, let us not doubt, that, by

the liberality of the city government and of our generous benefactors at home and abroad, a light will be kindled and go forth from these walls, now dedicated to the use of the FREE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, which will guide our children and our children's children in the path of intelligence and virtue, till the sun himself shall fall from the heavens.



## THE NEW YORK FREE CIRCULATING LIBRARY

ADDRESS IN ITS FAVOR AT A PUBLIC MEETING .

President Cleveland made this address on March 6, 1890, while a resident of New York City in the interval between his two presidential terms, at a meeting, at Chickering Hall, called for the purpose of directing attention to the work of the struggling Free Circulating Library and if possible to raise funds for its support, which was only partially insured by the City. Owing to increase in both public and private contributions this library was enabled to make rapid growth in the years immediately following until in 1901, when it was merged in the Circulation Department of the New York Public Library, it was operating eleven branches with a circulation of over 600,000. This institution was the pioneer of the popular, as distinguished from the scholarly, library idea in New York.

[Stephen] Grover Cleveland was born in Caldwell, N. J., March 18, 1837, the fifth son of a Presbyterian clergyman. He received a common-school education and after his father's death went in 1855 to live with an uncle in Buffalo, N. Y. He was admitted to the bar there in 1859, was assistant district attorney in 1863-66, sheriff in 1871-74 and mayor in 1882. In the latter year he was elected Governor of New York and in 1884 President of the United States. He was an unsuccessful candidate for re-election in 1888, but was elected again in 1892. He died in Princeton, N. J., where he had resided since his last presidential term, on June 24, 1908.

The words I shall speak on this occasion I intend rather as a pledge of my adherence to the cause in which you are enlisted than an attempt to say anything new or instructive. I gladly join with the enthusiasm of a new convert in the felicitations of those who have done noble and effective work in the establishment and maintenance in our city of a free circulating library, and it seems to me they have abundant cause for congratulation in review of the good which has already been accomplished through their efforts and in the contemplation of the further usefulness which awaits their continued endeavor.

In every enlightened country the value of popular education is fully recognized, not only as a direct benefit to its recipients, but as an element of strength and safety in organized society. Considered in these aspects it should nowhere be better appreciated than in this land of free institutions consecrated to the welfare and happiness of its citizens, and deriving its sanction and its power from the people. Here the character of the people is inevitably impressed upon the government, and here our public life can no more be higher and purer than the life of the people, than a stream can rise above its fountain or be purer than the spring in which it has its source.

That we have not failed to realize these conditions is demonstrated by the establishment of free public schools on every side, where children are not only invited but often obliged to submit themselves to such instruction as will better their situation in life and fit them to take part intelligently in the conduct of the government.

Thus, in our schools the young are taught to read, and in this manner the seed is sown, from which we expect a profitable return to the state, when its beneficiaries shall repay the educational advances made to them by an intelligent and patriotic performance of their social and political duties.

And yet if we are to create good citizenship, which is the object of popular education, and if we are to insure to the country the full benefit of public instruction, we can by no means consider the work as completely done in the school-room. While the young gathered there are fitting themselves to assume in the future their political obligations, there are others upon whom these obligations already rest, and who now



have the welfare and safety of the country in their keeping. Our work is badly done if these are neglected. They have passed the school age, and have perhaps availed themselves of free instruction; but they, as well as those still in the school, should, nevertheless, have within their reach the means of further mental improvement and the opportunity of gaining that additional knowledge and information which can only be secured by access to useful and instructive books.

The husbandman who expects to gain a profitable return from his orchards, not only carefully tends and cultivates the young trees in his nurseries as they grow to maturity but he generously enriches and cares for those in bearing and upon which he must rely for ripened fruit.

Teaching the children of our land to read is but the first step in the scheme of creating good citizens by means of free instruction. We teach the young to read so that both as children and as men and women they may read. Our teaching must lead to the habit and the desire of reading to be useful; and only as this result is reached can the work in our free schools be logically supplemented and made valuable.

Therefore, the same wise policy and intent which open the doors of our free schools to our young, also suggest the completion of the plan thus entered upon by placing books in the hands of those who in our schools have been taught to read.

A man or woman who never reads and is abandoned to unthinking torpor, or who allows the entire mental life to be bounded by the narrow lines of the daily recurring routine of effort for mere existence, cannot escape a condition of barrenness of mind, which not only causes the decay of individual contentment and happiness, but which fails to yield to the state its justly expected return of usefulness in valuable service and wholesome political action.

Another branch of this question should not be overlooked. It is not only of great importance that our youth and our men and women should have the ability, the desire, and the opportunity to read, but the kind of books they read is no less important. Without guidance and without the invitation and encouragement to read publications which will improve as well as interest, there is danger that our people will have in their hands books whose influence and tendency are of a negative

sort, if not positively bad and mischievous. Like other good things, the ability and opportunity to read may be so used as to defeat their beneficent purposes.

The boy who greedily devours the vicious tales of imaginary daring and blood-curdling adventure which in these days are far too accessible to the young will have his brain filled with notions of life and standards of manliness which, if they do not make him a menace to peace and good order, will certainly not tend to make him a useful member of society.

The man who devotes himself to the flash literature now much too common will, instead of increasing his value as a citizen, almost surely degenerate in his ideas of public duty and grow dull in appreciation of the obligations he owes his country.

In both these cases there will be a loss to the state. There is danger also that a positive and aggressive injury to the community will result, and such readers will certainly suffer deprivation to the happiness and contentment which are the fruits of improving study and well-regulated thought.

So, too, the young woman who seeks recreation and entertainment in reading silly and frivolous books, often of doubtful moral tendency, is herself in the way of becoming frivolous and silly, if not of weak morality. If she escapes this latter condition, she is certain to become utterly unfitted to bear patiently the burden of self-support or to assume the sacred duties of wife and mother.

Contemplating these truths, no one can doubt the importance of securing for those who read, as far as it is in our power, facilities for the study and reading of such books as will instruct and innocently entertain, and which will at the same time improve and correct the tastes and habits.

There is another thought somewhat in advance of those already suggested, which should not pass unnoticed.

As an outgrowth of the inventive and progressive spirit of our people, we have among us legions of men, and women, too, who restlessly desire to increase their knowledge of the new forces and agencies which at this time are being constantly dragged from their lurking-places and subjected to the use of man. Those earnest inquirers should all be given a chance and have put within their reach such books as will guide and inspire their efforts. If by this means the country shall gain

to itself a new inventor or be the patron of endeavor which shall add new elements to the sum of human happiness and comfort, its intervention will be well repaid.

These considerations, and the fact that many among us having the ability and inclination to read are unable to furnish themselves with profitable and wholesome books amply justify the beneficent mission of our Free Circulating Library. Its plan and operation, so exactly adjusted to meet a situation which cannot safely be ignored and to wants which ought not to be neglected, establish its claim upon the encouragement and reasonable aid of the public authorities and commend it most fully to the support and generosity of private benefaction.

The development which this good work has already reached in our city has exhibited the broad field yet remaining untouched and the inadequacy of present operations. It has brought to view also instances of noble individual philanthropy and disinterested private effort and contribution.

But it certainly seems that the time and money directed towards this object are confined to a circle of persons far too narrow, and that the public encouragement and aid have been greatly disproportioned to private endeavor.

The city of New York has never shown herself willing to be behind other cities in such work as is done by our Free Circulating Library, and while her people are much engrossed in business activity and enterprise they have never yet turned away from a cause once demonstrated to them to be so worthy and useful as this.

The demonstration is at hand. Let it be pressed upon our fellow citizens, and let them be shown the practical operation of the project you have in hand and the good it has accomplished, and the further good of which it is capable through their increased liberality, and it will be strange if they fail to respond generously to your appeal to put the city of New York in the front rank of the cities which have recognized the usefulness of the free circulating libraries.



## THE WADSWORTH ATHENAEUM

ADDRESSES AT THE OPENING OF ITS LIBRARY IN  
HARTFORD, CONN., JAN. 2, 1893.

These addresses, by Charles Dudley Warner and Charles H. Clark, are reprinted from brief abstracts given in *The Library Journal* of January, 1893.

Charles Dudley Warner was born in Plainfield, Mass., Sept. 12, 1829 and graduated at Hamilton College in 1851. He practised law in Chicago in 1856-60 and in 1861 became managing editor of the Hartford, Conn., *Press*. In 1867 on its consolidation with the *Courant*, he became co-editor. He was made associate editor of *Harper's Magazine* in 1884, and died at Hartford, Oct. 20, 1900. He was widely popular as an essayist, first gaining favorable notice by his "My Summer in a Garden."

This building and its contents are contributory to the excellence and enjoyment of life exactly as Bushnell Park is—not merely that it is a place of rest and recreation, but it is a training in beauty, in the appreciation of nobleness, and in the public and private refinement. Culture is a plant of rather slow growth. I suppose there never was such a change wrought, almost instantaneously, in a people as was wrought in the American people by the opening and exhibition of the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. Its effect was at once apparent everywhere. But knowledge precedes culture, culture being, after all, but another name for educational taste.

Now this institution is simply a means for the culture of the city of Hartford, in all ways, because literature and art—not taken externally, but absorbed as a part of our lives, not

only of knowledge, but of experience—are the things that make life worth living.

No one can speak too highly of the offices of a great library. It was one of our great essayists, you remember, who said that the monastery—speaking of it with reference to its books—was the ark that floated down over the tempest and darkness of the middle ages, in order to carry classic learning to the fifteenth century. They were repositories of learning. That is the old idea. And for a long time—almost to our day—that was the notion of the library. It was a place to put something away. It was not even like a market for the sale of provisions or eggs; indeed, if they were eggs the librarians thought it their duty to sit on them, with the idea that they might hatch out other books. That was a noble thing to do. But much better than that is to scatter these books abroad among the people, so that we shall not have reproduction—an egg for an egg—but that these books will so revivify the life that we shall have books new, that express the actual conditions and that appeal to the human life as it is. This is the modern idea of the library. This great collection, which is not to be secluded, is to be carried and even forced upon the people, so that it shall enter into and become a part of their daily lives.

You remember, perhaps, what Milton says about the books, in that noblest of noble defences of unlicensed printing, that “they are not dead things. As good almost,” he says, “kill a man as you kill a good book. Who kills a man, kills a reasonable being, made in God’s image. Who destroys a good book destroys reason itself, kills the image of God as it were, in the eye. Many a man,” he goes on to say, “lives a burden to the earth, but a good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life; so that if we slay a good book we would slay immortality rather than a life.”



Charles Hopkins Clark, who immediately followed Mr. Warner, was at this time editor in chief of *The Hartford Courant*, of which Mr. Warner was co-editor. Mr. Clark was born in Hartford April 1, 1848, graduated at Yale, and joined the *Courant* staff in 1871, becoming editor in 1890.

One of the earliest sins of my youth, or rather one of the earliest that is burnt into my memory, was committed in the library of what was then the Young Men's Institute. I spoke out loud! The rebuke that I received sent me down the stairs overwhelmed with a sense of the enormity of my crime, yet more than sustained by joy to think that I had escaped the utter annihilation with which my reprimand was freighted. And I can say that the awe with which I used to enter that chamber of silence, and the fear with which I regarded the librarian were the common property of all the young people of that somewhat remote period. But long since we found out that the old librarian was one of the gentlest and most in-offensive men, and that we had misunderstood him as completely as he had misunderstood us.

But I have no such gloomy recollection, nor to be honest, have I any recollection at all of the Wadsworth Athenaeum gallery, because, like everybody else who then lived in Hartford, I never went in there. The door was often open and the only sentinel on guard had no more formidable weapon than a pair of knitting-needles. But no one ever crossed that threshold. The simple legend, traced on a placard at the door, "Admission Ten Cents," did the business, or rather, to be more elegant as well as accurate, prevented any business being done. The people who came up the stone steps read the notice and turned off to the left to the library or to the right to the Historical Society, where entrance was free. I say free, but freedom must have its limits if we are to have safety, so the tin

sign on the outside of the door gave notice to the always unwelcome boy that he could not go in until he reached the mature age of twelve years. That was one of the things that I wanted to grow to full manhood for.

And I well remember my first visit there. As I walked slowly up the stairs I wondered what venerable monument of patriotic achievement, what new inspiration to love for our noble State whose history is such a priceless treasure, what vision of heroic self-sacrifice in her behalf would first burst upon my eager eyes when I should look around the hall. I looked and lo! there in a glass jar stood the chaste but familiar figure of Charles Hosmer's night-blooming cereus—the modest pioneer of the canned-fruit industry in this community.

I have made this brief review in order to suggest to you the state of innocuous desuetude in which for more or less time the various miscalled interests in this building had been lying for lack of any interest at all. The library had a limited and dwindling clientage. The Athenaeum was deserted. The Historical Society, with no funds and few friends, was exhibiting a collection of animal, vegetable, and mineral curiosities, while its real treasures of history and truth were by lock and key shut off from the very public for whom they were collected and preserved. Look at that picture, then look at this which greets us here to day.

In these elegant and spacious buildings the whole public of Hartford is welcome, without money and without price. The circulating library will furnish every home with books, and Miss Hewins, who has devoted her life to this town, is always ready to help the younger readers. The Library of Reference, monument alike to Mr. Watkinson's liberality and Dr. Trumbull's rare judgment and life-long devoted service as a librarian, offers free to all students the authorities on every branch of knowledge. The Historical Society, with improved facilities, has been able to adopt a more liberal policy, and is widening its claim upon public interest, and so increasing its usefulness, and, thanks largely to the women of Hartford, the Art Gallery and Art School are ready to spread their refining and wholesome influence all through this community.

## LIBRARIES AS LEAVEN

This address was delivered at the inauguration of the Free Public Library, Madison, Wis., by Prof. James D. Butler.

James Davie Butler was born in Rutland, Vt., March 15, 1815, and was graduated at Middlebury College, Vt., in 1836. He entered the Congregational ministry, and held the chairs of ancient languages in Wabash College, 1854-58 and the University of Wisconsin, 1858-67, after which he devoted himself to lecturing and writing until his death in Madison in 1905.

My subject is "Libraries as Leaven," or the relation of libraries to the increased diffusion of knowledge.

What is a Library? It is the knowledge of all brought within the reach of each one. It is an expanded encyclopædia, or the books which are, or ought to be, consulted in compiling a perfect encyclopædia.

Human knowledge—and hence the books in which it is treasured up—is divided by some authors into forty departments. I have their names here all written down—but I dare not read them. You would give no more quarter to such a catalogue than the lover gave to the mercantile inventory of his sweetheart's charms, when itemized as "two lips indifferent red," "two gray eyes with lids to them," and so on.

But all these forty classes of knowledge ought to be represented in a library, and the more largely the better. They should also mingle there in due proportion, "parts into parts reciprocally shot, and all so forming a harmonious whole." "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?"

I once lived in a town of a thousand families, where, through a legacy, one copy of some single author was annually presented to each family. But, with the same money, a thousand different works might have been every year purchased,

and all kept accessible by all the families. The result would have been a feast as appetizing to all palates as the miraculous manna which the rabbins tell us tasted to each Jew like that particular dainty which he loved best.

It is no objection to a library that no man will ever read it through. No man will read through his dictionary, and time is not long enough for a man to read all the words in the daily *Tribune*. Nor will any customer exhaust a store. Yet he demands an assortment from which to select the little that he needs. In every library most authors, bound up in congenial calf, sleep soundly in their own sheets. Yet the dust of dead men's bones, at the touch of genius, comes forth in a new life. How much that is best in Macaulay and in Buckle is extracted from bibliothecal rubbish—or reading which had never been read. Hence even Samson could not say to the jaw-bone of an ass: "I have no need of you." The wise thank God for fools. They get their living out of them, and mostly out of the greatest fools. In truth, no library is large enough. Guizot and Michelet complain of inability to consult certain books, even in that Parisian library, where books are as plenty as water in the deluge, and the shelves would reach from here to Milwaukee.

A library should be a cosmos; but it is a chaos till arrangement, catalogues and librarians bring us at once the volume we desire, and which, without them, would be as hard to fish up as the Atlantic cable lost in mid-ocean.

"Thus warlike arms in magazines we place,  
All ranged in order and disposed with grace:  
Not thus alone the curious eye to please,  
But to be *found*, when need requires, with ease."

In some libraries, however, books are arranged on a system which seems borrowed from Spanish hospitals, where patients are arranged according to religious creeds, rather than bodily complaints. Every library has more volumes than I can master; but no library though it be the conflux of all civilizations, has so many volumes as I may need to consult.

Chief Justice Story used to assert that no American could test the accuracy of Gibbon without crossing the Atlantic. Such an assertion would now, perhaps, be extravagant, yet many of Gibbon's references are still hard to trace in America. One instance may be worth notice. Our approaching national

centenary leads us to curiosity in reference to the secular feasts of the Romans. In Gibbon's account of the most famous among them, a thousand years from the founding of Rome, the main authority quoted is Zosimus. But the history of Zosimus you will seek in vain throughout Madison libraries. You will not find his name in the public collections of Chicago, or Cincinnati, or St. Louis, or San Francisco. It is unlikely that any single copy of Zosimus has yet penetrated west of our Atlantic slope.

But how dare I thus speak about Zosimus? How is it possible for me to know whether his history can, or cannot, be discovered, either on the Pacific shore, or in the Mississippi valley? I know it, thanks to the Library of our Historical Society, and specifically to its goodly array of bibliothecal catalogues.

Why will not our Centenary Women's Club buy our Free Library a Zosimus?

Free libraries, especially those maintained by public taxation, were scarcely known before the last half of the nineteenth century. If in an antiquarian mood, I could indeed bring forth curious details concerning half a hundred in continental Europe, some of them running back several centuries, but I forbear. The earliest British library law, similar to ours in Wisconsin, dates from 1850. The earliest in Massachusetts—and I suppose in America—was approved May 24, 1851. The first library opened in consequence of this law was in New Bedford, March 3, 1853. The grandest triumph under the Massachusetts law is in Boston. The free library there stands to-day surpassed in volumes by only three or four American libraries—say the Astor, Congress, and Harvard—while in arrangement, architecture, and equipment it is pronounced by the most enlightened foreigners unsurpassed by any library in the world.

Our legislature in 1872 empowered the mayors and councils in towns and cities to lay an annual tax of one mill on a dollar of the assessed valuation, for establishing and maintaining free libraries. This law will bear good fruit. Yet it is a step backward from the act of 1859. That act created a library fund by setting apart for that purpose one-tenth of the school-fund income, and imposing a tax of one-tenth of a mill on all property. The sum of \$88,784.78 had been thus accum-

ulated when the war of 1861 broke out,—and the money was used for military purposes. It ought to be refunded by the State, or United States, and expended for its original object. The great superiority of the law of 1859 lies in its extending to rural districts,—and so leaving no hamlet unvisited—while the maxim of the present law is, “Coals to Newcastle, owls to Athens, apples to Alcinous. He that hath—to him shall be given.” It gives a library to Madison, where 40,000 volumes were already within reach, but nothing at all to five and twenty other places in Dane County, whose need of books is ten times greater. But libraries bring forth after their kind, and free libraries, we may hope, will become co-extensive with free schools.

Madison, to-day, in opening to all her sons and daughters a Free Library, has outstripped every other municipality in the State. It is a noble preëminence, and will do her honor to the end of the world.

The Madison Free Library, it may be reasonably hoped, will approximate to the bibliothecal ideal. It starts with an inheritance of 3,308 volumes, accumulated during a score of years by the Madison Institute. Its revenue is considerable, and it will grow in even pace with the growth of the city. Nothing but Adam and Minerva was ever born of full stature. The tax now assessed for it would impoverish no man till after the lapse of thrice three thousand years. It was limited to less than a third of what the law allows because we make the entering edge of a wedge thin, and would learn wisdom from Satan who never makes his temptations so bad at the beginning as at the end. Is is only the first step that costs. The Free Library will be ready for windfalls, and so surely as history repeats itself, they will pour cornucopias into its lap. Of the million volumes in the British Museum, two out of every five were gifts. No wonder. Book-gatherers abhor the breaking up of their collections as we do the dissolution of the Union, or as abolitionists did the snapping of family ties by slave-traders. Lest what they have joined together shall be put asunder, they rejoice to lay up their treasures in an institution which shall never die. Accordingly, in tracing the origin of one hundred and eighty libraries in continental Europe, it has been discovered that all of them, except sixteen, were presented to the municipalities by book-lovers.



Experience this side the Atlantic is thus far equally encouraging. I will notice a single specimen. The Boston Free Library is mainly contributed by individuals. One thousand volumes were given by Everett; 2,300 by Bowditch; 11,360 by Theodore Parker; 26,000 by Joshua Bates; 1,899 by the Old South Church, and those of greater rarity than any other equal number of volumes. Then Ticknor and Prescott bestowed the best Spanish library ever gathered by private men, and Wheelwright one scarcely inferior, relating to South America. Of pecuniary benefactions, I will only mention \$10,000 from Lawrence, \$30,000 from Phillips, and \$50,000 from Bates. But legacies to the Free Library have become so common that we may confidently expect that, if any Bostonian shall die and bequeath it nothing, the courts will decide the neglect of the Library to be conclusive proof of insanity, and so will nullify his will! On the whole, we cannot be too sanguine concerning the prospective progress of our book-feast for the million.

But a library, however perfect, and though freely open to all the world, may be a light shining in a darkness which comprehendeth it not. Many years ago, I was a student in such a library at Rome. It was larger than any one in America at that time, and offered the best of all its stores daily to everybody, and that without charge. Yet it was well-nigh a solitude. The reason was obvious. My walk thither was through a gauntlet of beggar-boys, and I once took with me an Italian primer, and cried out that I would give something to any boy who could read. I held it up before nineteen in succession, but no one could spell out a line. They had eschewed not only writing as tempting to forgery, but reading also as a black art. Had they been giants they could,—like the barbarians who sacked Rome,—ruin, but not relish, the nectared sweets of books. To them the collective wisdom of the world was as sunshine to the blind, or as smoke in the nursery riddle,—“roomful, houseful, can’t catch a handful!”

“Or like gospel pearls which pigs neglect  
When pigs have that opportunity.”

But in regard to *our* Free Library, I have better hopes, and beg your leave to show *what use*, in my judgment, will be made of it. It will be resorted to for *amusement*. Some will flit through it in the spirit of the Viennese, who turn their central

cathedral into a thoroughfare on promenades and business walks. But such visitors will learn something in glancing at the backs of books. Books, as well as men, have a physiognomy. Here, as elsewhere, the admirers of Shakespeare will take out his plays, return them with the leaves uncut, and then insist that booksellers be instructed if Mr. Shakespeare writes any new book, to forward it without further orders. Many will have no eyes except for the volumes of *fiction*, and sometimes will rather run through these than read them. Novels are a sort of cake, which, if eaten alone, is prone to make mental dyspeptics. Yet most novel-readers will gain some profit from our library. Some of them will here acquire a facility in reading which for lack of practice has hitherto been unknown to them. No one has really learned to read, until he has read to learn. Their interest in stories will beguile the toil of becoming *ready* readers, and their range of reading will naturally widen. But if it does not, they may learn much. Every good fiction is *true*, if not to particular fact yet to general principles, to natural scenery, to human nature, to the ways of human life, manners, customs, the very age and body of the time. Even Tom Moore declares that "his chief work of fiction is founded on a long and labourious collection of facts." Again, when worn out by work, when care-crazed, and nerves are unstrung, who has not found in fiction—the balm of hurt minds—a recreation, a city of refuge, a restorative.

"Cups that cheer but not inebriate?"

In this way our free library will be a new pleasure, and the founder of it deserves the reward offered by the Sicilian tyrant, for such an invention. Work was never so monotonous as now; accordingly, play ought to be more than ever amusing. The Kilkenny cats, who devoured each other all but the tails, left one orphan kitten which began to eat up itself, but catching sight of a mouse was diverted from suicide. There is among us more than one disconsolate kitten now destroying himself, who will in our free feast of fiction espy a mouse which will reconcile him to life, and save him from himself. The rationale of this solace is indicated after a forcible, though rather a homely fashion, in the Chinese saying: "A dog chasing game does not mind the fleas which he *barks* at while he lies in his kennel." "The labour we delight in physics pain."

Again, in all great works of fiction the purpose is, while not o'erstepping the modesty of nature, to show virtue her own feature, and scorn her own image. Who can count the admirers of Scott and Dickens that have learned from their portraitures moral lessons so well as never to forget them;—to loathe the mean and aspire to the noble;—to shun evil and cleave to good—in spite of temptations to one and from the other?

But, after all, our book-treasury will only now and then bestow its best gifts on those who resort to it merely for pleasure. To most visitors of this class it must remain no more than a telescope to a child, something to play with rather than to look through. Accordingly, they no more exhaust the capacities of books than the Irish made full proof of potatoes while they cooked only the balls and left the tubers to rot in the ground.

But the Free Library will be resorted to for *instruction*. Few will always hold the amusing button so close to their eyes that it will hide the instructive sun. From the start it will be superior to every private collection in the city, and its superiority will increase. Accordingly, professional men will come thither to inform themselves either each in his own specialty, or sallying on excursions from their home fields. Besides the time-honoured and traditional three professions, editors and teachers will be there, learning how to answer the hard questions of pupils and subscribers. Each of these professionals will more or less make known what he learns. The bibliothecal odor will be as plain upon them as a certain other odor is upon those who emerge from the smoking-car or saloon. "Dispensing native perfumes they whisper whence they stole those balmy spoils." But the bibliothecal leaven will leaven the community more *directly*.

God has set geniuses as great lights in the firmament to give light and delight as well on the earth. The circuit of such suns is unto the ends of the heaven, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. More and more pervasive is their influence, like the spring-time, which leaves no corner of the land untouched. In a library every man will recognize some supreme author transfiguring whatever he touches,—crystallizing into diamonds by wit, turning to gold with poetry, and glorifying as with tongues of angels by eloquence, and whom

he hence worships as Scotchmen do Burns and as all the world does Shakespeare. Less and less do men entertain angels unawares, more and more are they ashamed to know the world's books only by name. Nobody now asks concerning *Paradise Lost*, "What does it prove?"

Moreover, the Free Library will be patronized by the people in quest of answers to multitudinous questions. Newspapers, whether in its reading-room or out of it, will rouse in many directions a curiosity they cannot satisfy, and so will urge to the library. There is a story that an Englishman in a London library, after looking through an atlas, said to a friend, "Help me find *Umbrage* on the map! I read in my gazette that the French have taken *Umbrage*. What a good-for-nothing minister is ours—to leave *Umbrage* so poorly defended that the French could take it." That John Bull discovered in the library either *umbrage*, or what was better for him—his own ignorance and the way to remove it, "taking umbrage" against himself. His gazette probably brought the same earnest inquirer to the library for *history* as well as for geography. A daily paper, which is the history of the world for one day, leads backward, as a stream carries our thoughts to its fountain. Whoever repairs to a library with one historical query will be likely to repeat his visit, since newspapers, in the light of history, will become more significant as the last chapter in a novel is more interesting to those who have read the previous chapters, and so often leads one back to them. Again, discussions are always arising, not merely in formal debates, but as we sit in the house and walk by the way. Some carry them on by assertions and counter-assertions—a strong will and a strong won't—equally positive and ignorant, discussing and sometimes leaving off the *dis*, till like Milton's devils they find no end, in wandering mazes lost. Too often "It comes to pass that a terrible oath, with a swaggering accent twanged off, gives an opinion more approbation than ever proof itself would have earned it." Others back up their opinions by *wagers*, in spite of a lurking feeling that

"Bets are the blockhead's argument,—  
The only logic he can vent,  
His minor and his major.—

'Tis to confess your head a worse  
Investigator than your purse,  
To reason with a wager."

But where standard books are at hand, investigation will often either take the place of disputation, or bring strife to a speedy end.

Let us hope those here seeking props for their arguments will never be those jealous lovers of books who cannot use them without using them up, or who spirit them away for themselves alone. Such abductors have sometimes infested the libraries in the Capitol. Their thefts can be justified only by that casuistry which holds stealing the relics of saints for a pious fraud. But in truth the more holy the saint, the more heinous the sacrilege of what Hood calls *Book-aneering*.

Moreover, every *lecture* delivered in the city will send some investigators to the library, that they may confute, or confirm, or amplify its teachings. A lecture that pops will not be as surely *popular* as formerly, if the library shall evince that what is true in it is not new, and that what is new is not true, or that the speaker draws on imaginations for facts and on facts for imaginations.

Every meeting of our Women's Centennial Club will start inquiries which cannot be answered without recourse to the library.

It is certain that books of *travel* will here be largely consulted. Some of us purpose to go abroad. Such will read beforehand in order to add a precious seeing to their eyes. They would dislike to have their experiences those of a lady who when asked what she saw in Rome answered "dirt," or of the London barber who at the coronation of Napoleon remembered nothing except that the Emperor was well shaved, or of the Bostonian fresh from the West who, when called on for his opinion of Madison, said it would be a pretty fair Massachusetts village if it were not spoiled by so many fresh water ponds around it. Others among us have travelled already, and we shall be studious in the library that we may ascertain what we ought to have seen—but did not, or the meaning of what we did see, but which was Greek to us. The Shah of Persia noted in his journal that of all the fine things in Europe the finest to his mind was a show of wax work.



His library would teach him better, and would not laugh at him, as we do. A Vermont friend of mine, after his trip to London, when asked whether he saw Westminster Abbey, confessed that he did not, but added that Westminster Abbey was out of town at the time of his visit. If he had free course in our library he would hardly excuse himself in that way again. Soon after crossing the Mississippi at Burlington, I heard a New York merchant, bound for California, remarking: "How much geography one learns in travelling. Here is Burlington. I always thought it in Illinois, but now I find it is in Missouri." Library-reading may by this time have added insight to his sight, and convicted him of the blunder which I suffered to pass uncorrected, though we chatted 100 miles together. There are others of us who, on hearing a traveller's tales, are curious to examine how far we, like the old prophet, should count the way-faring man a fool, and how far he uses his license to lie. Hence they will read that they may make up their minds whether all MARK TWAIN'S caricatures have the ring of truth.

A German table d'hôte of twenty courses will surfeit a careless diner before it is half over, and yet fail to afford him either what he likes best or what he should like best. Hence it compels guests to a careful choice what they will partake of and what refuse of the blessing there is no room to receive in its fulness. A similar influence will be exerted by the free library where we fall into the embarrassment of riches. We shall be driven to select from its bill of fare, that is the catalogue, that fraction which we can enjoy most and which will profit us most.

"Taste after taste upheld by kindest change."

Some persons, when they survey a library and perceive that they can never read the hundredth part of its volumes, will be attracted to those works which teach "what to read," or open a panoramic outlook on the diversified regions of the bookish world.

"Of all the best of man's best knowledges,  
The contents, indexes and title-pages,  
Through all past, present, and succeeding ages."

Unless we thus liberalize our views we are likely to vege-



tate, like the rhubarb pie plant, under a barrel, and see the world only through its bunghole. Ignorant of bibliographical guides and hence at a loss how to estimate books, the steward of a British nobleman sold as rubbish all volumes in the library which lacked *covers*. One of those thus disposed of, and bought by a pedlar for nine pence, proved to be the very earliest issue of the British press, snapped up by the British museum for £80, and could not now be bought for ten times that sum. In regard to the *intrinsic* value of books blunders more egregious are daily made. Libraries were never so needful as now, for libraries and life never lay so close to one another as now. Our familiar sights lead to interest in recondite knowledge. Photography, gas, the locomotive, kerosene, yes, every match that lights it, provokes questions in chemistry, or philosophy, which not every library can answer. No one can gaze at the dome of our Capitol without naturally falling into architectural inquiries which draw him through a world of books that expose the nakedness of his ignorance, yet never put him to open shame. But the truth is too palpable to dwell on that in our day life touches libraries at every point.

In all libraries there are readers whose emblem is dead fish who follow the stream, but thanks to various accidents, some of this class, ceasing to be passive recipients, begin to investigate as active seekers. They at once rise to a higher mental plane. The contrast between active seekers and passive recipients is analogous to that between the mountaineers and the maritime aborigines of California. The mountaineers lived on grizzly bears—food which it was impossible to seize without tasking their energies to the utmost. But tasking trains. The maritimes lived on salmon, which were so abundant and so tame that they could be caught by fishers who lay basking in the sun. But basking enervates. Naturally enough no Indians are superior to the mountaineers who are active seekers, nor yet inferior to the maritimes, who are passive recipients. What investigators seek they will not find at once; they may never find it. But they are sure to discover something better, so that they will say with LESSING, in the library at Wolfenbittel, "Were God to hold truth in one hand and search in the other, and give me my choice, I would say:

Give me seeking without finding, rather than finding without seeking!"

"All things that are,  
Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed."  
Courtship once over, the novel ends.

In the library where LESSING was made librarian—not that he might serve the library, but that the library might serve him—I took in my hand with reverence the inkstand out of which he distilled the essence of a thousand books, and reformed German literature as radically as LUTHER had reformed German religion.

All truths being inter-dependent, every road will lead to the end of the world, and so while studying one subject a man becomes interested in others, and his range of inquiry expands. When he kindles one dry stick, many green ones will catch, and his brightest blazes are lit up by unexpected sparks. One quickly learns to love hunting, and before working up many topics, he forms an investigating habit which will perpetuate itself. Thus while seeking an oyster, he finds a pearl, like SAUL who sought asses and found a kingdom. Henceforth he reads more by subjects, each a cord to string pearls on, than by volumes, for he feels that,

"Unless to some particular end designed,  
Reading is but a specious trifling of the mind,  
And then, like ill-digested food,  
To humors turns and not to blood."

But less and less of that sort is his reading, though it range through all time, and tax all the world. Such an inquirer will live longer than METHUSELAH, for he will have more thoughts, yet he will wish each of his minutes was a millenary. He will read with an appetite growing as long as he lives; indeed reading will help him to live longer. A thousand such readers feel what one has spoken out, saying:

"In a library I was thrown, instead of worse society, into the company of poets, philosophers and sages—to me good angels and ministers of grace. From these silent instructors who often do more than fathers for our interests, from these delightful associates I learned something of the divine and more of the human religion. They were my interpreters in

the House Beautiful of God, and my guides among the Delectable Mountains of Nature,

Blessing be with them and eternal praise,  
Who gave me nobler loves and nobler cares."

Pre-eminently to the *young* will the myriad-minded library be an oracle in perplexities. They have been better trained in public schools than we of the last generation were. They have broken ground in more various studies, and their curiosity has been stimulated concerning more questions. Each question, each study puts in their hand a new *key* to the locks which shut up libraries. Singers love to sing, and it is joy for the just to do justice, so will our youth rejoice to use in the library the skill they have acquired in school as naturally as when they get jack knives they take to whittling. The public schools then find in free libraries their fitting supplement, and complement. Schools without libraries feed a prisoner with salted viands and then tantalize his thirst with pitchers and bottles, all empty. The free school and the free library will join hands like husband and wife in a well-matched marriage.

"He is the half-part of a blessed man,  
Left to be finished by such as she;  
And she a fair divided excellence,  
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him;  
But two such silver currents when they join,  
Do glorify the banks that bind them in.

Each befits the other, as ALEXANDER said concerning the finest poem and the most costly casket in the world when he enshrined the Iliad in the Persian box of gold and gems. Both are lotteries where tickets cost nothing and everybody may draw all the prizes.

In addition to this, the free library will be to some nothing less than an *inspiration*. To some—I wish I could say to *all*, but alas, it is only an "elect few" whom the library can inspire. Spectacles are invaluable,—but only to those who have eyes. One Sultan never wore a shirt that had not every word of the Koran written on it yet absorbed little piety. AARON'S excuse for making only a golden calf was, that the Jews did not bring him gold enough to make an ox. The cherubim who

know most can never equal the seraphim who love most. An ugly and stupid man, walking with a lady on each arm, boasts that he is between wit and beauty, but may not imbibe one particle of either.

To some, however, a free library will make up for the lack of a liberal education. More than that. It will furnish such an education every jot and tittle of it, and that, in some sense, better than was ever bestowed in a college, because acquired in the face of greater difficulties. Libraries have often vouchsafed this priceless boon. That in Salem did to BOWDITCH, the mathematician, in the last century, and to WHIPPLE, the essayist, in this. The Edinburgh library made HUME an historian. Another was inspiration to COBBETT. So was that of the Erfurt convent to LUTHER. "It had purchased," says his biographer, "at heavy cost, several Latin Bibles just printed for the first time in the neighboring city of Mainz. When he first opened one of these tomes his eyes fell on the story of HANNAH and SAMUEL. "O, God," he murmured, "could I have one of these books I would seek no other worldly treasure." A great revolution then took place in his soul. His happiest hours were in the library. Concerning such a scholar—

"We cannot say: 'Tis pity  
He lacks instructions,' for he seems a master  
To most that teach."

The influence of ancient Libraries on classical writers is manifest from their quotations. PLUTARCH'S have been traced to 250 authors. PLINY'S to 2,000 works. Classical Libraries preserved in Constantinople, so long as studied, made there a Goshen of light in the Dark Ages, and when carried to Italy proved a Promethean spark to kindle occidental culture anew. It is well known that inventions are oftenest struck out in the Patent Office, the grand store-house of inventions. In the world of mind, as well as of matter, new ideas are suggested where old ideas most congregate, or are most communed with. According to CHAUCER,

"Out of old fields, as man saith,  
Cometh all the new corn from year to year,  
And out of old books, in good faith,  
Cometh all the new science that men lear."

The idea of writing the "Life of COLUMBUS" first darted

into the mind of IRVING, when, in Madrid, he found himself surrounded by an unrivaled magazine of materials made ready to his hand, and for which the world had been ransacked. Thus the sight of means to make good books makes good books made.

Not only those volumes which compose the body of literature, but those finer essences which form its soul,—the literature of power,—stamped in Nature's mint of ecstasy—are marked all over with proofs of familiarity with the best that had been achieved,—each in its own department. Nobody has hesitated thus to affirm concerning VIRGIL, DANTE, TASSO, MILTON. But it is commonly said that SHAKESPEARE was *ignorant*. The truth is that no ignorant man, no ordinary, scholar can understand his allusions, historical, romantic, classical, or those to art, science, nationalities, customs—or even his words. He could get more from a Library in a day than most men in a life-time, but he needed it still.

In speaking of SHAKESPEARE, I mean the man who wrote the Plays reputed his, no matter whether that author was BACON, or JOHN SMITH, or even our townsman GEORGE B.

We ought to say that SHAKESPEARE was a universal man,—because he was heir of all ages,—and his was universal knowledge, a knowledge which neither can we fathom nor could he find without a library.

His peculiarity was ability to discern the immortal part of books, or to stamp what were otherwise perishable with his own immortality. Whoever can do much without tools, can do more with them. Accordingly men do their broken weapons rather use than their bare hands. Whoever can do much without a library, can do more with a library. DAVID did much with a sling, but more with better arms, and builded an armory on which there hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

If then there be among us any one person endued with any spark of Shakespearian or other genius he will find it kindling to a flame through contact in this library with similar celestial fires. To such a "meeting soul!" as MILTON calls it,—the library will prove a better bonanza than has been prospected in our States of silver and gold. Though having nothing he shall possess all things,—infinite riches in a little room.

Thus our Free Library will amuse, and instruct, and in-

spire. Over its entrance I seem to read as on the front of the oldest in the world, the inscription, "The healing of the soul," or the words of FRANKLIN to his namesake town, "I give you books instead of a bell, sense rather than sound." Let it have free course for a generation, calling to culture as ceaselessly as a standing army calls to war, and this community will say with SENECA, "Leisure without books and letters is mental death and burial."

The first public library in Ohio—just two years younger than the State—was founded in Ames. It was bought by hunters who threw together a lot of raccoon skins, sent them in a sleigh by one of their number to Boston and there bartered them for books. They soon hunted Greek as zealously as game, and while Ames remained a hamlet ten of them, or their children, were among the early graduates of the State University.

The influences of a library are *cumulative*, and sometimes become manifest only after a long lapse of ages. The cuniform library of Assyrian bricks, dating from pre-historic periods, burned up, buried and forgotten just now emerges from its grave speaking in a voice heard round the world, and no less authoritative than a second book of Genesis. From its shelves more centuries look down upon us than upon NAPOLEON at the Pyramids.

Libraries are hemmed in by no lines of State, nation, race, language, religion or century. Their field is the world. But ours is the cosmopolitan age, and we are pre-eminently the cosmopolitan people. More than any other people, then must we feel the need of libraries, which are, of all institutions, the most cosmopolitan. Hence they will benefit us most.

Considerations like these demonstrate that free libraries tend to *equality* and *fraternity*. They are free lunches, crying to all: "Cut, and come again!" As we all have equal rights at the polls and in court, so have we in the free library. In church we each secure a blessing in proportion to our capacity; so can we in the library. In both blessed are they who hunger and thirst, for they shall be filled. In public schools all can enjoy the best of teaching without money and without price; so can they in the free library. Free libraries will create an aristocracy—one open to talent and toil, but to nothing else; the aristocracy of knowledge. Where street cars have



been introduced, half the private carriages are soon given up, so the establishment of free libraries will lead many to refrain from large domestic collections as superfluous, and to the transfer of many a private library to the public shelves, where they will not only do more good, but will be better cared for, better arranged, and more accessible than they now are even to their owners. One millionaire as we walked into his library, said with a sigh: "See how many gaps there are in my shelves! Five hundred of my books are missing, lent and lost." "Lost!" cried I, half in joke, "say rather found! lost to you, but found each by some one who will make the most of them. Would to heaven these 5,000 were lost in the same way, lost by you who have no time nor care for them, found by those who have both. Nobody could steal them from you, but at most only from moths and worms, dust and mould." Rich men who have bought libraries as luxuries will learn that the way to save them is to lose them, and that their books serve them best when deposited in free libraries.

Many varieties of *sham* equality result from outside pressure. In Venetian gondolas all awnings are required to be black that no one may outshine his neighbor. Under the first republic the French proscribed all titles but citizen, and citizeness, which they gave to everybody. Communists would make all men's shares in property equal. Endeavors of this sort not only fail, but prove suicidal like the impetuous Irishman, insisting that one man is as good as another, and a *great dey better too*. The influence of Free Libraries, however is toward genuine and not merely visible equality. Thanks to them the most expensive luxury of the rich becomes the daily food of the poor, and the tree of knowledge no more bears forbidden fruit. A volume which I can draw out of a library at will is worth as much to me as if I owned it. In fact, though my private library is not small, the books I read are more often borrowed than my own.

If I take out books from a library. I am doubly spurred to make their contents my own, because those books must be returned more promptly than to the friend who neither exacts fines nor yet even notes in a book what book we borrow.

FRANKLIN tells us that "he often sat up reading, the greater part of the night, when a book borrowed (he means *stolen*) from booksellers in the evening, was to be returned in the

morning lest it should be found missing." In proportion as men make full proof of books, they become alike *inside*, in real communion with great authors, in information, taste, mental capacity, mastery of speech,—accomplishments which cannot be lost, and which render each one more equal and congenial with his fellows. Men will still differ by God, not by man. What then is the Free Library less than the key stone in our Republican arch?

When we would show attention to strangers, it has been a Madison custom to take them into our cemetery. That graveyard is well worth showing. But in time to come I trust we shall rather exhibit our Libraries, and say; "These are our jewels." Not tombs, but living shrines that on the living still work miracles,—the shrines where all the relics of the saints full of true virtue are preserved, where the dead live and the dumb speak—the dead sceptered sovereigns who still rule our spirits from their urns. This sun of our intellectual worlds is

"Made porous to receive  
And drink the liquid light, firm to retain  
Its gathered beams, great palace now of light,  
Hither as to a fountain countless stars  
Repairing in their golden urns draw light."

Let us rejoice in it all glorious within, even as our Capitol and University parks are without.

A library,—the assembled souls of all men deem most wise, the only men who speak loud enough for posterity to hear;—reminds me of that fresco by RAPHAEL, which I admired most of all his Vatican masterpieces, popularly styled "The School of Athens," and which I hope to see hung up as the genius of our library hall, as I have seen it in many. In some one of the fifty-two figures glowing with life in that picture, every variety of culture has a representative. You see there the practical man, like FRANKLIN'S Poor Richard, in Diogenes rough and ready by his tub. Archimedes is drawing a diagram in the sand. On the broad steps of a temple stand Ptolemy, with the terrestrial and Hipparchus with the celestial globe. No sage is without a docile retinue. SOCRATES, with sly humor, is humbling the self-sufficient ALCIBIADES that he may rouse him to loftier aspirations. PYTHAGORAS is writing among disciples, one of whom holds his musical scale, while

above all, and in the midst of the temple, appear ARISTOTLE, father of natural philosophy, pointing down to the earth, and PLATO, the father of spiritual philosophy with hand uplifted toward heaven, man as it were feeling for God. The culture proffered in such a School of Athens, as RAPHAEL painted—and as an ideal free library is to my mind, has its fittest emblem in the miracle of architecture, the dome,—which is well said to unite clustered arches and pillars and radiate in equal expansion towards every quarter of the earth, while with every convergent curve it soars heavenward, buried in air, and looking to the stars.

“Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime.”



## THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

This section, devoted to the general relations of the library and society, which opened with a historical account by Prof. Moses Coit Tyler, may appropriately close with another of similar tenor, contributed eleven years later to *The American Magazine of Civics* (New York, May, 1895) by Prof. Henry H. Barber. It covers some of the same ground but gives results to a later date, while it is still only introductory to the social development of more recent years.

Henry Hervey Barber was born in Warwick, Mass., Dec. 30, 1835, graduated at Meadville Theological Seminary in 1861 and after holding several Unitarian pastorates was professor of philosophy and theology there from 1884 to 1904. He was also editor of the Unitarian Review from 1875 to 1884. He died about 1915.

No public institution has made greater progress during the last few years or grown more rapidly in public interest and favor than the free public library. The building of a magnificent structure in Chicago, together with the excellent Newberry free reference library, and in cooperation with the fast growing library of the Chicago University, will make perhaps the most superb public provision for free literary culture ever furnished by any municipality. Boston has lately transferred its more than half a million volumes to the new and noble public library building on the Back Bay. The newspapers of this last week tell us that in New York Mr. Tilden is after all not to be finally counted out; but that the two millions rescued from his estate by the high sense of honor of one of his heirs is to be joined with the invaluable Astor Library, and the choice Lennox Reference Library, and all made free and available to the public—a property valued in the aggregate at eight million dollars. These events,

together with the recent founding of the Carnegie free libraries in Pittsburg and Allegheny, the not very remote establishment of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, and the addition by Mr. Henry C. Lea to the splendid Ridgway foundation in Philadelphia, constitute a series of brilliant triumphs for the free public library, unparalled in the history of educational institutions, and seldom equalled, I must think, in the intellectual progress of civilization.

Nor do these metropolitan successes indicate, after all, the most essential advance. The frequency with which private beneficence is coming to the aid of public enterprise in smaller cities and country towns, for the establishment and increase of these libraries; the recent notable instances of stimulative auxiliary legislation; and the growth of intelligent interest in new and widely scattered sections of the civilized world, are equally significant, and perhaps even more widely beneficent. It is the era of the free public library; and it is of special interest to us to see that our community and our commonwealth are moving in accord with this tide of new feeling and enterprise concerning it.

Of special interest, I say, to us as Pennsylvanians; for we are glad to remember that it is here that the first impulse was given to the foundation of the system of circulating libraries, the development of which is the free public library in England and America. Benjamin Franklin, after considerable effort, founded in 1732 the Philadelphia Library Company, the "mother," as he himself calls it, "of all the subscription libraries in North America."

This library which Franklin started for the advantage of himself and his fifty young business associates, in the early time, when, as he says, "there was not a good bookseller's shop in any of the colonies to the southward of Boston," and when most of the books had to be imported from England, was followed soon by the establishment of more ambitious similar libraries in Newport (1747) and Hartford (1774); and later in many other places in England and this country. These were called public libraries, though books could only be taken out by subscribers. Probably, however, as in Philadelphia, the librarian could "permit any civil gentlemen to peruse the books of the library in the library room."

But it was in the formation of many so-called "Social Libraries" in the smaller cities and country towns of New England



and the Middle States, early in the present century, that the foundations of the free municipal library were laid. These subscription libraries, in their growth and in their decay, no less than in the appetite for books they developed, created a demand and at length a necessity for public provision for what had come to be one of the prime intellectual needs of many communities.

Meantime in Scotland, in 1816, Samuel Brown of Haddington, following in part the methods of London booksellers, established a system of free itinerating libraries, loaning without cost selections of fifty books in each package to villages and neighborhoods that would engage to circulate and take proper care of them. At the end of two years each loan was called in, and another of different works sent in its place. This scheme was for many years highly successful, and doubtless highly useful; but seems to have failed soon after the death of its projector and inspirer in 1839. The system had the earnest sanction of Lord Brougham, and about 1825 was taken up in some parts of England; and, in a modified form, has had a great success in Melbourne and its neighborhood, in Australia. Stanley Jevons, whose article on the rationale of free public libraries in his "Methods of Social Reform" is one of the most interesting and valuable contributions to the literature of this subject, commends it as the best form of extending free public libraries in the rural portions of Great Britain, and he estimates that there ought to be three thousand such literary itinerants in England and Wales.

This system was copied in this country in the School District Libraries which were started in the state of New York in 1835, and a few years afterward were in successful operation in Massachusetts and other New England states, and in Michigan and Ohio at least, among states further west. At first every school district raising thirty dollars the first year and ten dollars thereafter, by tax or subscription, was assisted by the state—I cite the Massachusetts statute—to a like sum; and a small but choice selection of books sent to it for free circulation within the district. A little later Massachusetts, at least, removed this condition; and supplied every school district with such a library. These libraries after remaining in use for a while, and generally being thoroughly read, were exchanged among the districts. New books were thus continually coming to new readers. This movement was earnestly forwarded by that pioneer among

American educators, Horace Mann, and during the period of my boyhood was a godsend to the young people of New England. I want to bless the memory of Samuel Brown, Father Page (a pioneer of the system in New York), and Horace Mann for the gleams of literary light thus cast across the bookless darkness of New England rural homes forty to fifty years ago. This highly economical missionary agency of general intelligence passed away in New England with the incoming of the more satisfactory town system of free libraries. The cause of its decadence elsewhere is not clear, but it has lately had a remarkable resurrection in New York, as we soon shall see.

The first free town library in America, or the world, supported by municipal taxation, was established by the efforts of Abiel Abbot, D.D., in Peterboro, New Hampshire, in 1833. A decayed social library and an operatives' library, and perhaps some other small collections, were thus gathered under the shelter of the town; and took on new life from its fostering care, and the small annual appropriation for new books which is the breath of life to all libraries. Here, as always, it was *a man* that inspired the advance movement and carried it on to successful fulfilment.

In 1849, New Hampshire passed a general law enabling towns and cities to maintain free libraries by taxation; and in 1851 Massachusetts, which had granted Boston in 1847 the right to establish such a library, passed a similar general enabling act. Several other states followed almost immediately, and nearly every northern and northwestern state, except Pennsylvania, has since adopted the measure. In 1893, twenty states had enacted similar statutes; and, in all, more than seven hundred free libraries have been established under them. They have increased—as might naturally have been expected—most rapidly in the portions of the country where other library agencies, and where an efficient public school system, have been longest and most efficiently at work. Thus, of the seven hundred libraries, more than three hundred are in Massachusetts (according to the returns of the Public Library Commission for 1894), or 1,233 volumes for every thousand of population; in New Hampshire something over one hundred (in 1894), or 464 volumes per thousand of inhabitants.

Great Britain has kept nearly equal pace with our foremost states in free library legislation. A general enabling act to es-

tablish and support free libraries for the people from municipal rates was passed by Parliament in 1850, and accepted with great energy and enthusiasm by many of the northern towns and cities. Eighty-six free libraries, not including branches, had been opened before 1880; but, as in this country, the conservatism of the southern portions of the country has prevented their general establishment. For similar reasons only the province of Ontario has made any considerable movement in this direction in the Dominion of Canada.

This hasty historical sketch would be very incomplete without some account of the recent legislation, in several states, for the assistance of the smaller towns and villages in the establishment and increase of public libraries. This legislation has already had marvelous results. Massachusetts, in 1890, appropriated one hundred dollars to any town that would raise by taxation, or appropriate from the dog tax, or otherwise raise, at least fifty dollars (or if its valuation was less than one million dollars it should raise twenty-five dollars, or if less than \$250,000 it should raise at least fifteen dollars); and should agree to take care of the books, and furnish the agency of distribution. The sums granted by the state are in the hands of a board of commissioners appointed by the governor (with the advice and consent of the council); and so far these commissioners—librarians and others—have been eminent citizens, serving without salaries, and having only \$500 in their hands annually for clerk hire and traveling expenses. The commission is also required to give advice and information to librarians and others concerning selection of books, cataloguing, and administration; and to select and forward the books granted by the state.

Now for results. The commission has thus aided in establishing, in four years, more than sixty free public libraries in small towns (out of one hundred and four not thus supplied) and its action has shamed a few larger towns into establishing them; so that now only two and three fourths per cent of the population of the state, in forty-four small towns, were in January, 1894, without their advantages. And this has been accomplished with an entire expense to the commonwealth of less than ten thousand dollars. *Per contra*, more than half a million dollars were given by individuals in a single year for similar purposes within the state. Certainly, this has been a most eco-

nomical and effective public outlay; free, too, from all suspicion of any one's fattening by political jobbery.

The record of New Hampshire is even more remarkable. This state passed a law in 1891, similar to the one outlined above, and over eighty towns accepted its provisions, and established free libraries within a twelvemonth after it came in force. We are glad to read that the states of Maine, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania are moving in the direction of a measure that has proved so effective in its operation, and that must be so widely beneficent.

The state of New York has adopted another system to stimulate the development of the free library. Her enabling act of many years ago produced, as we have seen, comparatively small results; and in 1892 a law was passed authorizing the Regents of the University of New York to lend for a limited time—usually six months—selections of books from the duplicate department of the state library, or from books purchased for the purpose, to any public library in the state; or, where none exists, to twenty-five petitioners in any town or village of the state. A fee of five dollars is required, to cover cost of transportation, catalogue, etc., for a loan of one hundred volumes, and a smaller sum (three dollars) for a loan of fifty volumes. This plan, it will be seen, is a revival of the old school district method; and of that instituted by Samuel Brown in Scotland, and the later one found successful in Australia. The antipodes have a fashion lately of suggesting valuable object-lessons for social legislation. In small communities it has the advantage of making books do manifold duty, and of meeting the wants of varied communities and occupations. By judicious and varied selection, clubs, classes, schools, and reading circles may be aided in special courses and investigations. At the end of twenty months one hundred and twenty-five of these free loan libraries had been sent out by the New York Board of Regents; of which nearly one half (44) went to communities without public libraries, the remainder going to libraries already established (22), to university extension centers (18), and to academy libraries open to the public (22). Eleven thousand nine hundred volumes were thus made accessible to the public, with a total circulation of not far from 25,000 volumes and 9,000 readers. This system, which seems even more economical than the Massachusetts one, has greatly promoted interest in good reading, and led to the

establishment of several local public libraries. The system is very elastic and is easily adapted to the rapidly growing demands for its privileges. As a pioneer method, or as auxiliary to municipal libraries, it promises excellent results.

After this historical survey it would hardly seem necessary to dwell upon the arguments in behalf of the free public library. "There is probably no mode of expending public money," says Stanley Jevons, "which gives a more extraordinary and immediate return in utility and innocent enjoyment." He affirms that in Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and some other great towns in England, as in similar communities in this country, where such libraries have existed for years, there is but one opinion about them. "They are classed with town-halls, police courts, prisons, and poorhouses as necessary adjuncts of our stage of civilization." A more natural, and certainly more cheerful, collocation would class them with free schools, museums, and public parks, as Jevons himself afterwards suggests. "The main *raison d'être* of free public libraries, as indeed of public museums, art galleries, parks, halls, public clocks, and many other kinds of public works, is the enormous increase of utility which is thereby acquired for the community at a trifling cost." He proceeds to illustrate by several instances what he calls "the remarkable multiplication of utility" in the case of free lending libraries by several instances. Every book, in the first year of the Birmingham Free Library, was issued on an average seventeen times, and the periodical literature turned over fifty times. In Leeds, every book was used eighteen times. In larger libraries and in later use, of course, the figures are less, averaging from three to ten times, the whole cost of each issue averaging only from two to five cents. Similar statistics may be found in the *Forum* article already referred to in regard to the manifold use of books furnished in New York.

The comfort and moral economy of a cheerful, well-lighted reading-room, too, is overwhelmingly illustrated. Mr. Jevons found that in Manchester all persons of suitable age visited the free libraries on an average thirteen times a year, of whom three fourths came to read in the reading-rooms. Such a refuge from the perils of the saloon and the street is an immense benefaction in any neighborhood.

The relative cheapness of securing this means of general culture and enjoyment, this efficient antidote to vice and ignorance,



is strikingly shown by comparing its cost with other items of governmental expenditure, and the statistics of national luxuries and vices. The eighty-six free libraries in the large cities of Great Britain cost not more than half a million dollars per year—one fifth the cost of a first class ironclad. The statistics I have given show that the cost of the two war vessels just voted by Congress might be abundantly sufficient to insure the organization on the Massachusetts plan of a free library in every village and country town of the United States, not now accessible to such a library. The expenditure for drink, for horse-racing, or even for tobacco, for a single year, would royally equip and endow a public library for every thousand people now without such privileges. As post-office savings banks are, wherever established, a mighty engine for teaching thrift, as public parks are an incalculable source of health and enjoyment in our cities, so the public library, "the free literary park," as Jevons calls it, is a most effective agency for the promotion of culture and civilization.

In the year 1851, George Ticknor, the distinguished author of the "History of Spanish Literature" and a benefactor of the Boston Public Library, wrote to Edward Everett: "I would establish a library which differs from all free libraries yet attempted; I mean one in which any popular books tending to moral and intellectual improvement shall be furnished in such numbers that many persons can be reading the same book at the same time; in short, that not only the best books of all sorts, but the pleasant literature of the day, shall be made accessible to the whole people when they most care for it—that is, when it is fresh and new. I would thus by following the popular taste—unless it should demand something injurious—create a real appetite for healthy reading. This appetite once formed will take care of itself. It will in a great majority of cases demand better and better books."

Mr. Everett's conservatism doubted the wisdom of these principles for the foundation of a library: but they are essentially those which have proved sound in the free library system of England and New England, of Australia and the North-western cities. In the light of fifty years' experience, indeed, Everett's skepticism reads like Governor Berkeley's report on education in Virginia, in which he thanked God that there were no free schools in Virginia and hoped that there would be none



for a hundred years. The communities in which libraries, approaching George Ticknor's ideal, have been longest established, would do without paved streets or electric lights sooner than without these libraries, and they support them by taxation as cheerfully as the public schools. Indeed, the free library in not a few communities is reckoned an invaluable and indispensable adjunct of the public school, the very crown of the system of popular education. Such librarians as Green of Worcester, Massachusetts, and Whitney of Watertown, and Hosmer of Minneapolis, keep in touch with the work of the schools, and apprise the various classes of pupils of new books especially valuable for their work. More than this, they have regard to the needs of the various clubs, trades, and professions, and keep their members aware of valuable books in their special departments. But perhaps the most helpful service of all is rendered by capable librarians in the constant advice given to inexperienced readers, and the frequent bulletins sent out to stimulate the interest and instruct the intelligence of the community. It is of special interest to note that the demand for good reading has been greatly increased wherever the public library has been administered in this way. Indeed, booksellers and proprietary libraries have come to favor the opening of the free library as largely increasing the demand for their books.

It is not strange that with this large and various capacity of social service, the free library should be rapidly growing in public favor; nor that private munificence should frequently come to the municipal provision. There is no public object for which so generous gifts are often made. In the year 1893, for instance, five hundred thousand dollars were contributed to public libraries and the erection of library buildings in Massachusetts alone. "There has been ready perception," says Fletcher in his "Public Libraries in America," "of the truth that one's memory cannot better be perpetuated than by association with an institution so popular and at the same time so elevating and refining as the public library. Memorial libraries are therefore very abundant, and as expense has not been spared in the erection of such memorials, many of our towns, even the smaller ones, are ornamented by library buildings which are gems of architecture. . . . The fact remains, with all its significance, that about the public library cluster naturally the affections and the interest of the community. In its endowment, on the one hand by private

beneficence, and on the other by public taxation, is illustrated that collaboration of the rich and the poor in the pursuit of the highest ends which has in it the promise, and perhaps the potency, of the solution of vexing social questions."

The remembrance that these statements are only locally accepted, and that large portions of England and the United States have hardly moved toward the establishment of public libraries, may prompt a consideration of certain objections which are still sometimes urged. Civilization accepts its most benignant and effective agencies of progress only under protest; and it is not, therefore, wholly inexplicable that fifty years of unmixed and increasing success should have left some excellent and otherwise intelligent people unconvinced of the beneficence of the free public library. A friend of mine was enthusiastically setting forth the advantages of such libraries, and their rapid multiplication and growing service in New England, at the dinner table of one of the most distinguished, philosophic, and progressive of contemporary Englishmen; and was not a little surprised to be cut short with the decided comment, "I do not believe in it." The Englishman's fastidious preference for high fences and compartment railway carriages pervades all his intellectual conceptions also; and makes him impervious even to Stanley Jevons's overwhelming demonstration of the moral, social, and economic utility of the free public library; impervious even to the appeal that ignorance and narrow intellectual opportunity must be supposed to make upon enlightened philanthropy.

Mr. Herbert Spencer and the individualists oppose to the public library, supported by taxation, their wellworn declamation about the injustice of making one man pay for another man's culture and amusement; and urge the dictum of *laissez faire* in civilization and government. But as the post-office and the public school have survived their onslaughts we may not feel compelled to surrender the advantages of the free library. For, as with the school, it is easy to show that mental health and light are as primary interests of the community as material; and that it is precisely because those most deficient are least sensible of their defect that society must seek to remedy it. Mr. Spencer's analogy between hunger for food and hunger for knowledge is utterly fallacious. The physical appetite may be trusted to seek vigorously its own supply; the intellectual appetite has most to

be aroused where intellectual starvation is most imminent; and it grows only by what it feeds on. Men usually value most, indeed, what they work or pay for; but it is precisely those who do not value good books at all who need to be tempted and trained to their appreciation. And it is just the children of those whose parents will not, or cannot, provide them wholesome reading, that society cannot afford to let go wholly unprovided.

The smallest fee here proves an effective bar, as the experience of all subscription libraries proves. When the Springfield (Mass.) library was made free, its circulation was trebled the first year—though the fee had been only one dollar—and in a few years rose six or seven fold. "The Mercantile Library of Peoria, Ill.," says Mr. Crunden, "turned over to the city and made free, notes an increase in ten years, of members from two hundred and seventy-five to four thousand five hundred, and of issues from fifteen thousand to ninety thousand." So always. If the dollar fee were removed from the circulation of the books of our Meadville City Library, for instance, within five years they would go into fifteen hundred families instead of less than three hundred, as now; and the added twelve hundred families would be the very ones where the books would be of highest service. And, perhaps, more beneficent still would be the influence upon the vastly larger number who would frequent the library, and grow intelligent through the multiplied use of its reading facilities, and the help of its valuable reference department. The reaction upon the general intelligence of the community would make itself felt in the increasing intelligence of its working men and the higher standard of life this would bring among them. In short, it would insure economic progress.

Besides the economic advantages, and much more important, the influence of a well-furnished free library would tell in the training of citizens. The discussion of economic and social questions, eager and often bitter as it is, would become less crude and partisan in the knowledge of the best books and magazine articles upon the topics involved. The reading of history, biography, and travels would exert a broadening, enlightening, and often inspiring influence. To make wholesome literature more accessible than dime novels would save many boys and girls from ruin, rouse many dormant intellects to higher life, and supply effective rivals to the saloons and other low re-

sorts. Philanthropy and religion alike demand the wide opening of such an "effectual door" to the opportunities of the higher life.

It is sometimes objected that the records of all public libraries show that the lightest literature is most read, that fiction constitutes one half or three fourths of the books circulated. But besides the obvious consideration that only wholesome fiction finds place in all well-appointed public libraries, Horace Greeley's view has much to commend it, viz.: that all pure reading, however light, tends to develop a taste for more vigorous and instructive literature. Besides, it may well be urged that fiction is not only the current form of literary art, but also the effective vehicle of current social theories, philanthropies, and reforms; and that much of the most earnest thinking and serious moral purpose of this age is embodied in it. Under such intelligent and careful selection as the public opinion of the community may provide for, the public library will furnish a healthful substitute and corrective for the unappointed and vagrant reading of that large section of young people most in need of guidance.

I have left myself but a moment to suggest one or two practical questions that may need consideration in the establishment of a new system of free public libraries in communities or a commonwealth. Next to thorough discussion of their proved beneficence, an efficient enabling act is certainly the first desideratum, in any state still without it, so that towns and cities may tax themselves for this purpose. And it is most important that this act be not so narrowly limited that communities shall be unable to attempt anything worth while. Better wait five years, or ten years, more for the statute that will enable our communities to put themselves in line with the most advanced in the country in this respect, than to enact a starveling and ineffective statute that shall

"Keep the word of promise in our ear,  
And break it to our hope,"

as has already sometimes happened. The public appropriation is so limited by penny-wise legislation in a number of states as to discourage all action, and kill all interest in the matter.

In the same way, it is to be hoped that these states will ac-

company their enabling acts by auxiliary legislation similar to that in Massachusetts and New Hampshire; or, perhaps still better, patterned upon that of New York. It is difficult to decide upon the comparative advantages of these two systems. That of Massachusetts seems to me better for permanent results; but that of New York seems likely to be more immediately effective in stirring the sluggish interest of indifferent communities. Both are wonderfully economical in money, and both have great effectiveness when worked by the intelligent interest of even a few enthusiastic friends of the free library movement in any community. It would seem that even a governor who thinks five million people cannot afford \$25,000 for the "Birds of Pennsylvania" might consent to spend a fifth of that sum per year to begin a work that would not end, if once well begun, without putting a new and most effective agency of social culture and even economic progress within the reach of every boy and girl in the state.

The machinery through which to plan and begin this great and hopeful experiment should be carefully considered. Massachusetts's unsalaried commission of eminent citizens, New York's Board of University Regents, alike insure that in those commonwealths the work will be carried on under the most hopeful and efficient conditions. Some such unpartisan and public-spirited agency is absolutely demanded for the success of the movement in a state that has to begin it *de novo*; and the *personnel* of the agency is the most important point in any legislation initiating it.

There is also a difference of opinion as to whether school boards, or boards specially constituted for the purpose, should have charge of public libraries. My opinion is decidedly in favor of the latter; for while school boards would bring the library, as is most desirable, into closer relation with the public schools, an independent board, chosen, perhaps, by the school board in connection with the city council, as sometimes in Massachusetts, would be likely to bring more ability, independence, and careful consideration to the affairs of the library, and to separate it more completely from injurious partisan and personal politics.





## THE COMMUNITY'S SERVICE TO THE LIBRARY

The Public Library, like the Public School, is the creature of the community, which owes it provision for keeping it in condition to render the service for which it was created. This duty of course, includes adequate financial support but does not end here. Among the most important adjuncts to such support are the aid that can be given by enlightened public opinion and by organized groups in the maintenance of liberal and helpful policies, and the appointment of a governing board equally conscious of its responsibilities and its limitations.



## THE RELATION OF THE STATE TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

This statement of first principles was made by Melvil Dewey at the Second International Library Conference, held in London, July 13-16, 1897, and is reprinted from the Transactions and Proceedings of the Conference (London, 1898). In reading this address, it must be kept in mind that it was made to Englishmen, whose conception of the functions of a public library were then, as now, much more conservative than ours. A sketch of Dr. Dewey will be found in Vol. I. of this series.

We have been listening to an admirable account of the development of the library movement from earliest times to the present day, and I venture to believe that when the history of the age in which we live is written, and is looked back upon by those who shall come after, it will be known distinctively as the "Library Age."

Libraries of one sort or another have existed from the beginning of human history, and we are now well into the fifth century since the invention of printing; so that it would seem as if there had been abundant time for library development. But so great an institution as the modern library is of slow growth. It has taken a thousand years to develop our school system from university down to kindergarten. The public library is much more rapidly going through corresponding stages in order to come to its own. The original library was a reservoir, getting in and keeping safely, a storehouse for posterity. That was and is a great function, for which I have profound respect. Then, after many centuries, came another library epoch, for which we all feel still greater respect. The cistern was made a fountain; giving out was seen to be more important than getting in. The library is no longer merely a passive receptacle, but becomes an aggressive educational force in every

community. The reservoir will not become a stagnant pool, for, in its branches and deliveries, the public library has mains and pipes laid through every street, and reaching almost to the door of every householder. And we live now not in the age of the reservoir, but in the age of the fountain. In our zeal and admiration, however, we are apt to forget that there is yet another and even more important stage to reach. In my own city, some time ago, we spent half a million dollars in providing an ample supply of water. But we found that we had really opened convenient communication with the cemetery by water, for the quality of the new and abundant beverage was such that our death-rate steadily rose. The burning question became qualitative, not quantitative, and we are now spending our money on efficient filtration. Of course no library intends to circulate injurious books, but equally no town intends to distribute harmful water. We are concerned more with the results than with the intention. The mortality tables make plain the physical defect, but alas! science has as yet devised no instruments delicate enough to record the greater danger to the individual and the State from poison in the great current, which has come to be a mighty flood, of modern reading matter. The most hopeful, and perhaps the only practicable, method of guarding against this serious danger is through the public library, which must now in the last days of this eventful century recognise the gravity of the new responsibility which it cannot shirk. Before another audience I might dwell at length on what this problem of selection means, but the representative librarians of the world will understand my claim that, wonderful as was the development from the cistern to the fountain, its importance is overshadowed by this great question of excluding the pernicious, which I sum up in the word filtration. This is the great problem of the modern library, and its solution must depend largely on the State.

It is often said that the modern periodicals and newspapers are our greatest danger; but this, of course, is true only of the sensational and other objectionable types. I yield to none in my high appreciation of what the best kind of newspaper may do in its capacity as the strongest ally of the public library and of the public school. I am confident that early in the next century such journals will be recognised as a distinct part of our educational machinery, but I am equally clear that the worst journals,

conducted merely as money-making enterprises, and catering to the worst instead of to the best elements of both society and individuals, are the most potent factors for evil, and the greatest enemy which the ideal librarian has to combat in carrying forward his best work. They leave their habitual readers with neither time nor taste for anything above their own low plane. The mind will inevitably rise or fall to the level of its habitual reading, and we apostles and missionaries of the book have no more disheartening outlook than on the readers whose literary atmosphere is limited to the modern sensational newspapers. But the apologists for such reading say that the history of their own times is of more importance to them than any other history; should they not, therefore, become as familiar as possible with it? But when a man, on account of "pressure of business," never looks inside any good book, yet has time to read everything in the newspapers, he is—well, specialising too much in "history." How many men and women there are, who, from year's end to year's end, read nothing but the so-called history of their own times, and who can tell you nothing better than which dog won the last fight! It is a good thing to know the history of our own times; so is a pinch of salt a good thing on one's breakfast potato, but it is not necessary to drink a barrel of sea water each morning in order to get it.

It is highly desirable that I should know the geology and topography of my own State, but I can learn all that is worth knowing without creeping on hands and knees with nose close to the ground over the barnyards and dump heaps of our commonwealth, under the vain delusion that I am exhaustively studying its geology. We must join this battle squarely. The eternal conflict of good and the best with bad and the worst is on. The librarian must be the librarian militant before he can be the librarian triumphant. At the end of another century, when a conference like this is held, our descendants will look back with wonder to find that we have so long been satisfied to leave the control of the all-pervading, all-influencing newspaper in the hands of people who have behind them no motive better than the "almighty dollar." The solution of our difficulties lies in recognition by the State that public libraries are not only good things, but that they are an absolutely necessary part of our educational system. We started with the university, but found that we had to put under it the college. Then we went a step

further, and had the academy and high school to prepare for the college; the primary and grammar schools to prepare for the high school; and now we have the kindergarten under the primary school. I am not giving a chronology, but simply pointing out that during these centuries educators have constantly been facing the question of adequate provision for meeting completely the public wants. We have at last reached step by step from the university to the nursery, and have provided a series of schools covering the entire field. Yet, with all this, we have not attained the full system of education that we ought to attain, and every thoughtful person is now asking, "What next?"

Huxley has well said that a system of education which in the early years trains boys and girls to read and then makes no provision for what they shall read during all the rest of their lives, would be as senseless as to teach our children the expert use of the knife, fork, and spoon, and then make no provision for their daily food. The whole history of education has been a series of broadening conceptions. I can recall no case in which the ideal has narrowed, but step by step we have come to a general recognition that education is for poor as well as rich, for plebeian as well as prince, for black and white, for native and foreigner, for brilliant or backward, for women as well as men, for deaf, dumb, and blind, and all defectives and delinquents, who in the old conception were left without the pale. It is almost within our memory that we have come to substantial agreement that the State owes an elementary education to every boy and girl born within its limits, not alone as a right to the child, but as a matter of safety and practical wisdom on the part of the State; and this broader conception is followed closely by a second and still broader one, that every boy and girl is entitled not only to an elementary, but to something also of higher education. I have met no competent student of this subject who dares deny that hereafter the State must recognize that education is not alone for the young, for limited courses, in schools which take all the time of their pupils, but that it must regard adults as well; and not alone for short courses, but all through life—not in our recognised teaching institutions alone, but in that study outside of office or working hours that may be carried on at home. I may sum it up in the one sentence, "Higher education, for adults, at home, through life."

In this home education, which must hereafter be recognised



side by side with school education, the library is the great central agent round which study clubs, reading circles, extension teaching, museums, and the other allied agencies must cluster. A statesman solicitous for the future welfare of his country will find his most fruitful field in protecting and guiding the reading of the people. It is what a man reads that shapes his future, which depends, not at once upon the rostrum and the pulpit, but on the book and the newspaper. In education we recognise that the supreme end is the building of character, but many of us have never thought clearly how directly this character-building rests upon the public library. It is reading that begets reflection, reflection begets motive, motive begets action, and action begets habit, and habit begets character; and who here dares question this, that it is not the air nor the water, nor yet the "roast beef of Old England," not its history nor traditions nor laws nor geographic location, but *character*, that has made the Anglo-Saxons, England and her daughters across the seas, the most wonderful people of the earth. It is not brawn, but brain. The dogs and horses might have the physical qualities, but it is the mind and soul, and those elements of true greatness which can best be instilled into a people through the reading of good and great books, that have made a race of which we are justly all so proud. One of the wisest of Frenchmen said of the Franco-Prussian War, when the needle-gun was suggested as the explanation of German victory, "No; it was not the needle-gun, nor the German soldier who held it, nor yet the German schoolmaster who trained the soldier, but it was the German university that made the schoolmaster."

"Knowledge is power," and it is knowledge that has made England and America great. Think of the men who read the poorest newspapers, but know nothing of our best books. Can the State afford to make other things free, and not make free true and useful knowledge as preserved in books? Can the State recognize the necessity for free schools, and fail to provide free access to the best reading in all realms of knowledge?

"Free as air," was the old-time strongest expression. Then men learned how absolutely essential to physical well-being was abundance of water, and our language records in its favourite expression, "free as water," the meaning of the untold millions that civilization has spent to supply all people freely with this essential. We are learning the greater lesson about the necessity

of free knowledge more slowly, because intellectual and spiritual things are not so readily discerned by our mortal eyes, and it takes more time to read even those messages that God has written very large for those who have eyes to see; but the time is not far distant, mark my words, when our speech will again record the general acceptance of a great truth in the common phrase, as "free as knowledge." We should make the public understand the relation of the school system to the library system; that the library is not merely a collection of books, or a storehouse, but an aggressive and active source of education, side by side with the free schools. If the issue came—but, thank God, it never will—between giving up either the library or the free school, I am not sure that I would not choose for the welfare of the country the public library rather than the school. This may sound strange from one who has given his life to education, but I believe that even without our schools nearly every boy and girl would somehow learn to read; and when I soberly consider the influence on lives and characters and on the State, it seems probable that, infinitely valuable as is the work of our free schools, it would be exceeded by what could be done by a system of free public libraries, reaching every boy and girl and man and woman in the community, and so administered as to provide each freely from childhood to the grave with the best reading in every field of interest and activity.

The State, whatever it may or may not do, should recognise the library as being as essential to public welfare as is the school, and it should give it as careful protection from dangers without and within as it gives to institutions like banks and insurance companies. The State should protect the library against unjust laws, improper interference, or pernicious influence of any kind from without. It should guard it also against misconduct, incapacity, or neglect on the part of its trustees, officers, or employees. Beside the direct appropriations for its support, it should grant the most liberal powers for holding property given by individuals for the public benefit, and, above all, should grant entire exemption from taxation. To tax a free public library for doing its beneficent work is theorising gone mad. It is as absurd as for a missionary to refuse admission to his preaching, or for the manager of a theatre in which a fire has just started to shut out every fireman till he had presented the conventional

coupon for a reserved seat. The example first set by my own State (New York) in the statute which I had the honour of drawing ought to be followed universally. We created a public libraries department, to devote its entire attention to advancing the best interests of public libraries. It would take the entire morning to sketch to you the various forms of beneficent work which we have found practicable. We help to establish new libraries, reorganise old ones, revise methods, select books, lend single books or entire libraries, grant books or money up to \$200 yearly to any library raising an equal sum from local sources, and, by means of correspondence, personal inspection, and steady work in a dozen directions, help every community to get the greatest practical good from the labour and money given to its free library. We have now about five hundred travelling libraries moving about in all parts of the State. The public library is rapidly becoming universal. For the Government not to recognise it in its own organisation is as absurd as it would be to have a standing army and no war department, or schools dotted all about the state and no department of education. Time forbids more than the mere naming of what is needed, but the first great step in summing up the relation of the State to public libraries is the establishment of a public libraries department, in charge of a strong man who appreciates the almost limitless opportunities for usefulness which this new field affords.

Our discussions this morning took such a turn that you could almost hear behind them, like the recurring motive of one of Wagner's operas, the question, "Who shall be greatest among librarians?" In our State Library School I give each year a course of five lectures on the qualifications of a librarian, and point out under a half-hundred different heads the things we should demand in an ideal librarian; but when we have covered the whole field of scholarship and technical knowledge and training, we must confess that overshadowing all are the qualities of the man. To my thinking, a great librarian must have a clear head, a strong hand, and, above all, a great heart. He must have a head as clear as the master in diplomacy; a hand as strong as he who quells the raging mob, or leads great armies on to victory; and a heart as great as he who, to save others, will, if need be, lay down his life. Such shall be greatest among

librarians; and, when I look into the future, I am inclined to think that most of the men who will achieve this greatness will be women.

It is well to hold up high ideals, but it would be a sad mistake to underrate the services of the noble men and women who in some, perhaps many, respects fall far short of the standards we lay down, and yet who have done, and are doing well, much of the world's best work. Let us dwell on what has been well done, not on what has been omitted or on what might have been done by other men in other circumstances.

I remember, some twenty-five years ago, reading in George Eliot's *Romola* these words, which we should remember when thinking of any great librarian who of necessity fails in some respects to meet all our ideals: "It was the fashion of old, when an ox was led out for sacrifice to Jupiter, to chalk the dark spots and give the offering a false show of unblemished whiteness. Let us fling away the chalk, and boldly say the victim was spotted; but it was not therefore in vain that his mighty heart was laid on the altar of men's highest hopes."

## METHODS OF SECURING THE INTEREST OF A COMMUNITY

This paper by Wm. E. Foster, Librarian of the Providence Library, appears in the double number of *The Library Journal* for September-October, 1880. Written forty years ago it is more advanced from the standpoint of socialization, especially as regards group-action, than some pronouncements that one might hear to-day. A sketch of Mr. Foster appears in Vol. I. of this series.

This mainly resolves itself into a consideration of direct and indirect methods. The one attempts only to supply the public with what it wants; the other, striving after the truest improvement of the readers, in time secures, with the growth of intelligent appreciation, an interest even more active, and vastly more permanent, than the other. No library may safely disregard either class of methods, and their proper adjustment is a point which may very profitably engage much of the librarian's attention.

It is true that the first of these is not likely to escape his attention. "What the public wants" is a consideration which will meet him frequently, from one end of the year to the other. No one needs to be told, for instance, that the public wants to be amused. Doubtless the class of books described as "humorous" would constitute, to a large body of readers in any one of our cities, the true ideal of a collection of books. The taste for imaginative literature begins early and lasts long, with a large number of readers. "Something new" is a phrase whose attractiveness is not far from universal. Still further, if it is a question between a "true account," which deals with stirring adventures, and another "true account," whose pages are devoted to an impassive statement of scientific facts, there is not much question which will find the most readers among the general public. "What the public

wants," then, as regards the choice of books, while it certainly does not indicate a high degree of enlightenment, has perhaps the merit of being true to nature.

There are certain points of administration, also, in which the interest of the public is concerned. It is in favor of having the library as near its place of residence as possible; and here, unfortunately, "the public" is a plural personage which cannot all be suited at once. It is in favor of that method of obtaining the privileges of the library which requires the least trouble and inconvenience on its part, and seldom sees the need of a careful verification of the applicant's identity. It is in favor of the fewest restrictions on access to the books, and on the time for keeping them. It is in favor, decidedly, of that "charging system" which will deliver the book soonest. It is in favor of finding the library open on all days and at all hours, sometimes even not regarding the specified hours announced as worthy of consideration. In short, while it is by no means difficult to persuade the public of the reasonableness of a particular restriction, yet its first thought is undeniably largely influenced by selfish considerations.

Nor is the larger part of the public any more fond of bestowing deep and painstaking thought upon the books which it reads, and of carrying the mind systematically through a complicated mental process. It is not improbable that some readers would be glad of some method of using books which should save them the trouble of any mental process. And, while these readers are so much averse to any troublesome efforts toward improvement on their own part, it would be scarcely reasonable to look for any very intelligent supervision by them of the reading of their children, or of the pupils in the schools. Here, again, what the public wants is "the royal road"—some "short and easy method."

That library, then, which would awaken and develop a lively interest among its readers in the miscellaneous public, cannot certainly complain of a lack of methods by which to secure such interest. It may include in its selection of books a suitable percentage of fiction, and humorous works. It may infuse "new blood" into the library by frequent and regular purchase of the latest publications. It may add largely to the department of voyages and travels, of books copiously illustrated,—of popular literature, in short. It may place its main



building in the center of population, and establish branches for the accommodation of outlying localities. It may recognize the desirableness of "the least red tape" in registering readers, of open book-shelves, of expeditious serving of readers, and long periods of time for the use of the library and the retention of books. It may furnish its readers with explanations and directions for obtaining and using the books which shall require the least difficulty in understanding and applying them. It may, and it should, recognize the value of all these principles, and the library which fails to act on them does so at its peril. Yet these points do not comprise all that demand attention; and the effectiveness of even these is due to the limits which are set to them. A certain amount of fiction is well enough, but to enlarge this department at the expense of all others would clearly defeat the library's purpose. Diminution of restrictions in the use of books is certainly agreeable to the public, but the removal of all restrictions would result in such a loss of books as would soon work its own cure.

The question, "What does the public want?" is not the only, nor, in fact, the chief question to be borne in mind in the conduct of a library. One has only to keep his eyes open to see how suggestive as to methods is this other question: "Of what service may the library be?" And it is safe to say that one who has not given the subject attention will be surprised to find at how many points a collection of books, and the thought there contained, touch human life. Here is a machine-shop with its hundred or more workmen, many of whom are anxious to study some mechanical work. The library has such works, and is glad to supply them. Here again is a society of natural history, whose members are systematically studying some department of natural science. To them, also, the library willingly offers its resources in that department. With no less willingness it offers its cooperation to those who are following a course of public lectures on some topic of political science or of art, to a college class studying topically some epoch of history or period of literature; or to a public-school teacher, with a class in geography; or a parent desiring some suitable reading for a child. Or, with no specified class of persons in view, it seeks to make its collection generally available, by regular references to its resources on matters of current and universal interest.

Much more effective, however, than the best of such attempts at reaching classes of readers will be the aid rendered to individual readers. Not general and indefinite, but specific and direct assistance, is here given, and, although at first this kind of work might seem to be impracticable in a large library, yet one who tries it will be interested to see how far such individual methods may be introduced. The librarian almost mechanically learns "to pigeon-hole" in his mind the peculiar tastes and lines of reading of single readers, and, when the occasion presents itself, can bring to their notice books and articles which they are glad to obtain. More than one librarian makes it a regular practice, in adding new books to the library or in collecting material bearing upon some one topic, to drop a postal to this and that reader who, he knows, will be glad of just this information. The more the conducting of a library can be made an individual matter, bringing particular books to the notice of particular readers, the more effective it becomes.

It remains to consider what may be called the "general effect" of such individual efforts, continued from one year to another. They will certainly result in giving the public a large amount of assistance. Being exerted in connection with the whole community, they cannot fail to leave an influence, like the school, the church, or the newspaper,—an influence moreover, which, if wisely directed, and intelligently shaped, will make the public library idea appreciably felt in the civilization of the country.

Nor can it fail to have a reflex influence in securing the interest of the public. If methods of the former class were able, by their direct agency, to accomplish practical results, even more significant and more permanent are those reached indirectly by this method. No class of people will be so truly attached to the institution, by active interest, as those who feel that they have been personally aided and improved through its agency. The former methods are directly adapted to secure popularity, the latter to win gratitude; and if it should ever become necessary to choose one of these, at the expense of the other, there can be little room for hesitation. The growth of public sentiment in communities like Boston and Worcester, where public libraries have been administered on these principles, and with these ends in view, for a series

of years, is very instructive. Public sentiment, like confidence, is "a plant of slow growth"; but experience shows that when the conviction has once thoroughly penetrated a community that an institution like this is sincerely aiming to serve the public, a hold on its sympathy and interest has been acquired not easily to be shaken. It should be the aim of each librarian to make the usefulness of his institution so manifest that the public will as soon think of dispensing with the post-office as with the library.



## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The justification for taxing the members of a community to support a Public Library, although rarely questioned to-day was argued with heat in former times. Earlier, there was the same difference of opinion with regard to the public schools. In order to obtain the argument in opposition, in its best form, we have had to draw from a British source, which we consider it proper to quote here because it elicited a reply from an American librarian which will immediately follow :





## FREE LIBRARIES

(AN ARGUMENT AGAINST PUBLIC SUPPORT)

This paper, by M. D. O'Brien, forms Chapter IX of the compilation of essays entitled "A Plea for Liberty" edited by Thomas Mackay (3rd ed. London, 1894). The sub-title of the book, "an argument against socialism and socialistic legislation," gives its viewpoint. There is a formidable introduction by Herbert Spencer in which he condemns even the extremely limited state support given at that time to general education in England as a "tyrannical system tamely submitted to by people who fancy themselves free." Mr. Spencer ends by asserting that the end, if this sort of thing is to go on, "must be a society like that of ancient Peru, dreadful to contemplate, in which the mass of the people, elaborately regimented in groups, . . . were superintended in their private lives as well as in their industries and toiled hopelessly for the support of the governmental organization."

A FREE LIBRARY may be defined as the socialists' continuation school. While State education is manufacturing readers for books, State-supported libraries are providing books for readers. The two functions are logically related. If you may take your education out of your neighbour's earnings, surely you may get your literature in the same manner. Literary dependency has the same justification as educational dependency; and, no doubt, habituation to the one helps to develop a strong desire for the other. A portion of our population has by legislation acquired the right to supply itself with necessities and luxuries at the cost of the rates. The art of earning such things

for themselves has been rendered superfluous. Progress therefore halts because this all-important instinct has fallen into disuse. At a point the rates will bear no more, and those who depend on them for their pleasures are doomed to disappointment. The identity of principle exemplified alike by compulsory education and compulsory libraries, logically involves the justification or condemnation of both; and, let us disguise the unpleasant truth in as many sounding phrases as we please, the fact remains that the carrying out of this socialistic principle means pauperism pure and simple. Have we forgotten the evils that resulted from the application of this principle under the old poor law? or do we imagine that when an evil changes its outward appearance it changes its inner essence also? The harm done to the national character by a policy of this nature varies in intensity in proportion to the necessity of the want supplied. If the thing supplied at public cost is really necessary and eagerly accepted by the people, it becomes more readily a potent cause of dependency, and at length an insupportable charge on the ratepayers. This was the experience of the old poor law. The cost of national education is fast approaching to the same state of things, and the problem will one day have to be faced: 'How is the burden of the cost of education to be returned to the shoulders of those who are responsible for it?' In this paper we are concerned with a smaller question. A very inconsiderable section of the people really want the Free Library; the question at the polls is generally treated with apathy, and only a very small proportion of the ratepayers record their votes one way or the other. As a matter of fact the Free Library is forced upon the public by a number of doctrinaire believers in the superhuman value of a mere literary education. It is not a popular want. The vast majority of people have still a greater faith in the training which results from practical contact with the real facts of life, and still only regard book-learning as a useful supplement, easily obtainable by those who really desire it and are likely to profit by it.

The history of the Education Acts is very analogous. The literary classes became alarmed at the ignorance of the poor, and instead of allowing the efforts of philanthropists, aided by the growing appreciation of education amongst the labouring class—already giving great promise of providing a true and voluntary remedy for the supposed evil—to work out a system of education on natural and healthy lines of spontaneous evolu-

tion, a course which would have added dignity and stability to the domestic life of the parents and given a real and technical system of education to the children—instead of this, the hasty politician rushed forward crying, 'The people do not want education, so we must compel them.' The compulsory and demoralizing character of the means reacts on the otherwise advantageous nature of the end, and the result is a mind-destroying system of cram for the children; summons, fines, and police for the parents. This is how the politician makes education a lovely and desirable thing. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the evils resulting from the State not allowing teachers and parents to adjust the educational arrangements so as to meet the felt requirements of the case. This communal despotism strikes at the very foundation of personal virtue, viz. the home, the instrument by which nature lifts human character above the non-moral sensuousness of the animal world. Let us never forget that the human mind is made up of lower and higher elements, and that the removal of personal duties—the practice-ground of the virtues—favours the development of the lower factors of character at the expense of the higher, of weeds at the expense of flowers.

What else can possibly result from the carrying out of a principle which means the public feeding, clothing, and lodging of children under official superintendence and control? Will it be contended that State officers can know better than parents what is really needed for children? Yet this is what our Free Educationalists are leading us to. The system which robs the parent of one of the noblest motives to effort—the desire to give a good education to his children—which weakens the sense of duty and takes away a wholesome stimulus to the mental and moral faculties, is only the beginning of an evil that menaces civilization and threatens to swallow up all natural distinctions and relationships in a low and promiscuous communism. This bribe of parental irresponsibility—this patent method of shirking duties—which the politician offers us in exchange for our manhood, is a scheme for encouraging the race to cast itself forth into the moral darkness of a world where the parents are all childless and the children all orphans.

The Free Library, however, has not yet reached the same degree of compulsion as the Free School. A majority of the local public must vote for it before it can be established; or

rather, we should say, there must be a majority favourable to it amongst *those who do take the trouble to record their votes*: usually only a very small proportion of the electorate think it worth while to cross the street in order to pay a visit to the poll. When the Library is established, its real popularity is to be measured by the fact that its books are borrowed by only about one per cent. of the population. We make bold to say that if it ever becomes popular, it will be an extremely mischievous institution. As yet it is merely a plaything for a number of well-meaning busybodies, and an occasional convenience to a few middle-class readers. The limited amount generally spent upon it prevents it from doing anything more than minister to the sensational indulgences of a very limited section of the reading public. If the working classes of the country ever really become students, it will be impossible to supply them with adequate store of books from the rates: if this is attempted, it can only be at a time when books will be but a small item in the expenditure which a dominant State Socialism seeks to lay on the public purse. On the one hand will stand a class whose only plan for satisfying their wants is the imposition of a new tax, and on the other a harried remnant of ratepayers, both soon to be overwhelmed by the near approach of national bankruptcy.

Want is the spring of human effort. Self-discipline, self-control, self-reliance, are the habits which grow in men who are allowed to act for themselves. The meddlesome forestalling of individual effort, which is being carried into mischievous excess, is going far to bind our poorer classes for another century of dependence.

Let us run, as rapidly as possible, through a few of the pleas set up by the advocates of this form of municipal socialism. Good books, it is said, are out of the reach of the working man. Whether this is true as regards books we shall see, but obviously it would be easy to make out a much stronger case for many other forms of amusement which are far more popular with the million than books; yet no one seriously proposes that the amusements of the poorer classes can *all* be supported by the rates. But a glance down the lists of some of our publishers will show any one that the statement is not true—is the very reverse of truth. When books like 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'Rasselas,' 'Paul and Virginia,' Byron's 'Childe Harold,' 'Lady of the Lake,' 'Marmion,' and

others, can be purchased from Messrs. Dicks at twopence each; when all Scott's novels can be obtained from the same publishers for threepence per story; when, from the same source, any of Shakespere's plays can be got for a penny each, it will not do to say that the best kind of literature is unpurchasable by a class that spends millions a year on alcohol, as well as thousands on tobacco and other luxuries. Three or four pence, which even comparatively poor people think nothing now-a-days of spending on an ounce of tobacco or a pipe, will buy enough of the best literature to last an ordinary reader at least a week or a fortnight. And when the book is read, there is the pleasure to be derived from lending or giving it to a friend, and of accepting the loan or gift of his in return; a custom that largely obtains in country districts where no socialistic collection of unjustly gotten books exists to hinder the development of personal thrift or poison the springs of spontaneous generosity. Lying on the table where this is written is a list of the works published in Cassell's National Library. How some of the old book-lovers who are gone—who lived in the days when the purchase of a good book involved some personal sacrifice—would have appreciated this valuable library! Here are 208 of the world's best books, each one of which contains some 200 pages of clear readable type. The published price is threepence each; but a discount of twenty-five per cent. is allowed when four or five or more are purchased. It would be a waste of space to give the entire list; but a few typical examples may be taken. Here are the Essays of Lord Macaulay; here are works by Plutarch, Herodotus, Plato, Xenophon, Lucian, Fénelon, Voltaire, Boccaccio, Gothe, and Lessing—in English, of course. Here is Walton's 'Complete Angler,' Goldsmith's 'Plays,' Bacon's 'Wisdom of the Ancients' and 'Essays.' Here are works by Burke, Swift, Steele and Addison, Milton, Johnson, Pope, Sydney Smith, Coleridge, Dickens, Landor, Fielding, Keats, Shelley, Defoe, Dryden, Carlyle, Locke, Bolingbroke, Shakespere, and many others. All Shakespere's plays are here complete, and each play is accompanied by the poem, story, or previous play on which it is founded. Here, for example, is the last of the series as yet published, 'All's Well that Ends Well'; it contains a translation of the story of Giletta of Narbona from Painter's 'Palace of Pleasure'; it is worth threepence to a student, if only for showing the difference between raw material and finished product.



Hundreds of new novels, including some of those of Thackeray, Kingsley, Dickens, Lytton, and other well-known authors, are to be obtained in most places for 4½d., and their secondhand price is less still. Considering the marvellous cheapness of good books, it is difficult to understand how any one can either blackmail his neighbour for them, or encourage working-men to do so. If a man will not deduct a few coppers now and then from his outlay in other luxuries to purchase literature, he cannot want literature very badly; if he does not value books sufficiently well to buy them with his own earnings he does not deserve to have them bought for him with other people's earnings. That poor women and others, who are often the sole support of a large family of children, should have their hard earnings confiscated to maintain readers—many of them well-to-do—in gratuitous literature, is an injustice not to be palliated by all the hollow cant about culture and education so freely indulged in at the present time. Some time ago there was a discussion on 'the sacrifice of education to examination.' There is another question quite as serious—the sacrifice of justice to so-called education.

Let us next consider the educational value of this institution.

It is hardly necessary for us to say that we have no objection, either for ourselves or for our neighbours, to novel-reading. On the contrary, we regard it as a legitimate form of recreation. All we argue is that it is not a luxury which should be paid for out of the rates. Now, to listen to the advocates of Free Libraries one would imagine that these institutions were only frequented by students, and that the books borrowed were for the most part of a profound and scholarly character. But the very reverse of this is the case. The committee of the Blackpool Free Library, in their Report for the year 1887-8, say:—'*Works of fiction and light literature enjoy the greatest degree of popularity, each book circulating eleven times in the year, while the more instructive books in the other classes circulate only once during the same period.*' According to this Report, out of a total average daily issue of 150 volumes, 137 are works of fiction and light literature. The average issue of history, which is the next largest item, is only 9 per diem.

No wonder is it, after such results as this, that the Committee should express the opinion 'that the rich stores of biography, history, travels, and works of science and art which have been



added in recent years are deserving of greater attention than has hitherto been given to them.'

Although the nominal and frequently exceeded limit is now one penny in the pound, there is no knowing how soon it may be raised. Already one of the members of the Library Association of the United Kingdom, a body composed to a considerable extent of librarians whose bureaucratic instincts naturally impel them to push their business by all possible means, has awarded a prize of ten guineas for a draft Library Bill, which, among other things, permits a twopenny instead of a penny rate. 'But,' says the *Daily News* of Oct. 4th, 1889, 'the feeling appeared to be unanimous that it would be *unwise* to put this forward as a part of the Association's programme, as it would enormously increase the opposition to the adoption of the Act in new localities.' No regard for the ratepayers' pockets holds them back; but only a fear of injuring business by frightening the bird whose feathers are to be plucked. Were it not for this the Bill would be pushed forward, and those ratepayers who have voted for the adoption of the Act in the belief that no more than one penny can be levied, would have the rate suddenly doubled over their heads without knowing it. Perhaps, after all, it would serve them right.

The intervention of this Association in the conduct of the agitation for Free Libraries is instructive, and points to the fact that if we admit the principle that the wants of the poorer classes generally are to be supplied from the rates, it is not the poorer classes themselves who are allowed to say what form the gift shall take. On the contrary the law is manipulated by a number of amiable enthusiasts who succeed in foisting their own fad on the public charges. If the working classes were allowed to choose the application of 1*d.* or 2*d.* in the pound it would not go to Free Libraries.

The enormous amount of light reading indulged in by the frequenters of Free Libraries leads us to expect that these places are largely used by well-to-do and other idlers. And this is exactly what we find. Free Libraries are perfect 'god-sends' to the town loafer, who finds himself housed and amused at the public expense, and may lounge away his time among the intellectual luxuries which his neighbours are taxed to provide for him. Says Mr. Mullins, the Birmingham librarian, 'No delicacy seemed to deter the poor tramp from using, not only the news-

room, but the best seats in the reference library *for a snooze*. Already the Committee had to complain of the use of the room for *betting*, and for the transaction of various businesses, and the exhibition of samples, writing out of orders, and other pursuits more suited to the commercial room of an hotel.' And referring to another Free Library, the same authority continues:—'In the Picton Room of the Liverpool Library, alcoves were once provided with small tables, on which were pens, ink, &c., but it was found that pupils were received in them by tutors, and much private letter-writing was done therein; so that when a respectable thief took away £20 worth of books they were closed.

After the nonsense usually indulged in by the officials of literary pauperism such candour as this is positively refreshing. It is seldom the high priest allows us to look behind the curtain in this fashion. As a rule, the admission is much less direct, and can only be gathered from a careful analysis of the statistics. According to the Bristol Report for last year, there were 416,418 borrowers during the twelve months preceding December 31, 1889: of these 148,992 are described as having 'no occupation.' The Report of the Atkinson Free Library of Southport informs us that out of the 1283 new borrowers who joined the library last year, 536 are written down as of 'no occupation.' At the same town, in the years 1887-8, there were 641 who, according to the report, were without any occupation, out of a total of 1481. According to the annual Report of the Leamington Free Public Library for 1888-9, 187 made a return 'no occupation,' out of a total of 282 applicants. In the Yarmouth Report for the same year, out of a total of 3085 new borrowers, 1044 are described as of 'no occupation'; the report for the previous year states the proportion as follows:—Total of borrowers, 2813; 'no occupation,' 1078; in the year before that the total was—3401; 'no occupation,' 1368.

Some reports give a fuller analysis of the different classes of people who use the libraries to which they refer. In the Wigan Report for last year we are told that 13,336 people made use of the reference library in that town during 1888-9. The largest items of this amount are given as follows:—Solicitors, 1214; clergy, 903; clerks and book-keepers, 1521; colliers, 961; schoolmasters and teachers, 801; architects and surveyors, 418; engineers, 490; enginemen, 438. At Newcastle-on-Tyne, last year, there were 11,620 persons used the reference library, and only 3949 of these were of 'no occupation.' Yet, notwithstanding

the numerical weakness of the latter, they managed to consult nearly half the books that were consulted during that year. The total number consulted was 36,100; and 16,800 were used by people who had 'no occupation.' And this is legislation for the Working Classes!

There is little doubt that at least forty-nine out of every fifty working-men have no interest whatever in these institutions. For one penny they can buy their favourite newspaper, which can be carried in the pocket and read at any time; whereas if they wanted to see a paper at a Free Library they would generally have to wait half an hour or an hour in a stuffy room, without being allowed to speak during the time. The following sensible remarks are from the pen of one who has risen to an honourable position from a very humble beginning without the aid of either Free Libraries or Free Schools:—

Not long ago a conference of working men was held at Salford to consider the question of rational amusement, when, in reply to a series of questions, it was stated that Free Libraries were not the places for poor, hard-working men, who had social wants which such libraries could not gratify. It was argued that people who went to work from six in the morning till six at night did not want to travel a mile or so to a Free Library. Music, gymnastics, smoking and conversation rooms, and other things were suggested, but in summing up the majority of replies, it appeared that amusement rather than intellectual improvement, or even reading, was what was most wanted by men after a hard day's toil. This appears to have been realised in the erection, according to Mr. Besant's conception, of the Palace of Delight in the east end of London.

The truth is that a Free Library favours one special section of the community—the book-readers—at the expense of all the rest. The injustice of such an institution is conspicuously apparent when it is remembered that temperaments and tastes are as various as faces. If one man may have his hobby paid for by his neighbours, why not all? Are theatre-goers, lovers of cricket, bicyclists, amateurs of music, and others to have their earnings confiscated, and their capacities for indulging in their own special hobbies curtailed, merely to satisfy gluttons of gratuitous novel-reading? A love of books is a great source of pleasure to many, but it is a crazy fancy to suppose that it should be so to all. If logic had anything to do with the matter we might expect to hear proposals for compelling the attendance of working men at the Free Library. But surely in this nineteenth century men might be trusted to choose their own amusements,

and might mutually refrain from charging the cost thereof to their neighbours' account. This pandering to selfishness is bad for all parties, and doubly so to the class it is specially intended to benefit.

The following imaginary dialogue will perhaps serve to show the inherent injustice of literary socialism.

*A* and *B* earn 1s. each by carrying luggage. Says *A* to *B*: 'I am in favour of circulating books by means of a subscription library; from this 1s. I therefore propose to deduct 1d. in order to compass my desire. There is my friend *C*, who is of the same opinion as myself, and he is willing to subscribe his quota to the scheme. We hope you will be willing to subscribe your mite, but if not, we intend to force you to do so, for, as you know, all private interests must give way to the public good.'

'Perhaps so,' replies *B*, 'but then, you see, I have my own opinions on the subject, and I do not believe that your method of supplying literature is the best method. Of course I may be wrong, but then I am logically entitled to the same freedom of thought and action as you yourself are. If you are entitled to have your views about a "Free" Library and to act upon them, I am equally entitled to the same liberty, so long as I don't interfere with you. I don't compel you to pay for my church, my theatre, or my club; why should you compel me to pay for your library? For my own part I don't want other people to keep me in literature, and I don't want to keep other people. I refuse therefore to pay the subscription.'

'Very well,' rejoins *A*, 'if that is the case I shall proceed to make you pay; and as I happen to represent a numerical majority the task will be an easy one.'

'But are we not man and man,' says *B*, 'and have not I the same right to spend my earnings in my own way as you have to spend yours in your way? Why should I be compelled to spend as you spend? Don't you see that you are claiming more for yourself than you are allowing to me, and are supplementing your own liberty by robbing me of mine? Is this the way you promote the public good? Is this your boasted free library? I tell you it is founded upon theft and upon the violation of the most sacred thing in this world—the liberty of your fellow man. It is the embodiment of a gross injustice, and only realises the selfish purpose of a cowardly and dishonest majority.'

'We have heard all this before,' replies *A*, 'but such consider-

ations must all give way before the public good. We are stronger than you are, and we have decided once and for all that you shall pay for a "Free" Library; don't make unnecessary resistance, or we shall have to proceed to extremities.'

And, after all, the so-called Free Library is not really free—only so in name. If the penny or twopenny rate gave even the shabbiest accommodation to anything like a fair proportion of its compulsory subscribers, there would not be standing room, and the ordinary subscription libraries would disappear. According to Mr. Thos. Greenwood, who in his book on 'Free Libraries' has given a table of the daily average number of visitors at the different Free Libraries distributed up and down the country, there is only one per cent., on an average, of visitors per day of the population of the town to which the library belongs accommodated for a rate of one penny in the pound,—sometimes more, sometimes less;—but the general proportion is about one per cent. Now what do these facts mean? If it costs one penny in the pound to accommodate so few, what would it cost for a fair proportion to receive anything like a share that would be worth having? Even now it is a frequent occurrence for a reader to wait for months before he can get the novel he wants. Says Mr. George Easter, the Norwich librarian:—'Novels most read are those by Ainsworth, *Ballantyne*, *Besant*, *Braddon*, *Collins*, *Craik*, Dickens, Fenn, Grant, *Haggard*, *Henty*, *C. Kingsley*, *Kingston*, *Edna Lyall*, Macdonald, Marryat, Oliphant, Payn, Reade, Reid, Verne, Warner, *Wood*, *Worboise*, and *Young*; of those underlined (in italics) the works are nearly always out.' The fact is, the Free Library means that the many shall work and pay and the few lounge and enjoy; theoretically it is free to all, but practically it can only be used by a few.

While there is such a run on novels, solid works are at a discount. At Newcastle-on-Tyne during 1880-81 we find that 2100 volumes of Miss Braddon's novels were issued (of course some would be issued many times over, as the whole set comprised only thirty-six volumes), while Bain's 'Mental and Moral Science' was lent out only twelve times in the year. There were 1320 volumes issued of Grant's novels, and fifteen issues of Butler's 'Analogy of Religion'; 4056 volumes of Lever's novels were issued, while Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' circulated four times; 4901 volumes of Lytton's novels were



issued, while Locke 'On the Understanding' went eight times. Mill's 'Logic' stands at fourteen issues as against Scott's novels, 3300; Spencer's 'Synthetic Philosophy' (8 vols.) had forty-three issues of separate volumes; Dickens' novels had 6810; Macaulay's 'History of England' (10 vols.) had sixty-four issues of separate volumes. Ouida's novels had 1020; Darwin's 'Origin of Species' (2 vols.) had thirty-six issues; Wood's novels, 1481. Mill's 'Political Economy' had eleven issues; Worboise's novels, 1964. Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' (2 vols.) had fourteen issues; Collins' novels, 1368.

'No worse than in other libraries,' it may be said; 'knowledge is at a discount: sensation at a premium everywhere!' Perfectly true; but are people to be taxed to give facilities for this? Novel reading in moderation is good: the endowment of novel reading by the rates is bad—that is our contention. And when it is remembered that any book requiring serious study cannot be galloped through, like a novel, in the week or fourteen days allowed for use, it becomes at once evident that this gratuitous lending system is only adapted for the circulation of sensation, and not for the acquirement of real knowledge. And this is the sort of thing people allow themselves to be rated and taxed for! This is progressive legislation, and its opponents are backward and illiberal!

Free Libraries are typical examples of the compulsory co-operation everywhere gaining ground in this country. Like all State socialism they are the negation of that liberty which is the goal of human progress. Every successful opposition to them is therefore a stroke for human advancement. This mendacious appeal to the numerical majority to force a demoralising and pauperising institution upon the minority, is an attempt to revive, in municipal legislation, a form of coercion we have outgrown in religious matters. At the present time there is a majority of Protestants in this country who, if they wished, could use their numerical strength to compel forced subscription from a minority of Catholics, for the support of those religious institutions which are regarded by their advocates as of quite equal importance to a Free Library. Yet this is not done; and why? Because in matters of religion we have learnt that liberty is better than force. In political and social questions this terrible lesson has yet to be learned. We deceive ourselves when we imagine that the struggle for personal liberty is over—probably the



fiercest part has yet to arise. The tyranny of the few over the many is past, that of the many over the few is to come. The temptation for power—whether of one man or a million men—to take the short cut, and attempt by recourse to a forcing process to produce that which can only come as the result of the slow and steady growth of ages of free action, is so great that probably centuries will elapse before experience will have made men proof against it. But, however long the conflict, the ultimate issue cannot be doubted. That indispensable condition of all human progress—liberty—cannot be permanently suppressed by the arbitrary dictates of majorities, however potent. When the socialistic legislation of to-day has been tried, it will be found, in the bitter experience of the future, that for a few temporary, often imaginary, advantages we have sacrificed that personal freedom and initiative without which even the longest life is but a stale and empty mockery.



## ARGUMENTS FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A rejoinder to the preceding paper was made by William E. Foster, of the Providence Public Library, before the American Library Association at its conference held in San Francisco, Cal., in 1891. It may be considered as giving the normal American view as contrasted with the ultra-conservative attitude of Mr. O'Brien. A sketch of Mr. Foster appears in Vol. I. of this series.

The rise of the public library system both in this country and Great Britain, during the past half-century, has been almost coincident with the very noteworthy reexamination of every phase of social economy now so powerfully influencing the thought of the world. In this discussion the contributions of Kaufmann, of Fawcett, of Graham, of Jevons, and above all, of Herbert Spencer, have been more than influential—they have been almost epoch-making—and whatever view one may hold in regard to the social question, in its various phases, one cannot fail to acknowledge the deep debt which we owe to these profound thinkers.

No book, from Mr. Spencer's point of view, which has appeared within recent years, is worthy of a wider reading than the volume entitled "A plea for liberty; an argument against socialism and socialistic legislation," which appeared about the beginning of the present year. In it thirteen writers, whose point of view is very nearly identical, have discussed in successive chapters such topics as postal communications, electric communication, investment, improvement of workingmen's homes, free libraries, education, and other subjects, in their relation to the question, "What action shall the State take in regard to them?" The underlying purpose of the book is thus expressed in the words of Mr. Mackay, the

editor of the volume:—"If the view set out in this volume is at all correct, it is very necessary that men should abandon the policy of indifference, and that they should do something to enlarge the atmosphere of liberty. This is to be accomplished not by reckless and revolutionary methods, but rather by a resolute resistance to new encroachment and by patient and statesmanlike endeavor to remove wherever practicable the restraints of regulation, and to give full play over a larger area to the creative forces of liberty, for liberty is the condition precedent to all solution of human difficulty." Surely this is a statement of the case which must powerfully appeal to all thinking men, and lead them to reexamine, at least, the principles on which State support of the various institutions referred to is based.

In such a spirit, a reexamination of the argument for public support of public libraries must be regarded as entirely germane to the objects which the American Library Association has at heart. In such a spirit the present paper proposes to weigh once more the principles which underlie our American library system, and the considerations brought forward by Mr. O'Brien in the chapter devoted to "Free libraries" in the volume referred to.

The half-century of discussion of "socialism and socialistic legislation" already referred to has made few things so clear as the fact that the arguments employed on any subject—social subjects in particular—are weakened in almost the exact ratio in which they are allowed to be tinged by passion and excited feeling. It must therefore be regarded as unfortunate that Mr. O'Brien's chapter suffers most emphatically from comparison with the generally high level of calm and unimpassioned argument, characterizing the larger portion of the book. Whether this is to be explained on the basis of the apocryphal legal maxim, "When you have no case, abuse your opponent," or whether Mr. O'Brien entered the lists fresh from some too recent participation in a personal contest over the question, we do not undertake to inquire. The fact remains that not only do the writers of the other chapters of the book appear from a careful reading to state their arguments more effectively, but that the reader is also impressed with the fact that they have a case which admits of more effective argument.

Let us glance in succession at the points which Mr. O'Brien has aimed to make. They may be grouped in general under two heads; first, those which relate to the injury (in Mr. O'Brien's view) inflicted on the individual user of a free library from having it aided by public support, and second, those which relate to the tax-payer's grievance (in Mr. O'Brien's view) in helping to support it. The former is of course the side of the question most germane to the general purpose of the book, and it is therefore an occasion for surprise to notice that in Mr. O'Brien's enumeration of arguments those coming under the other class outnumber it in the ratio of six to one. First of all, to use Mr. O'Brien's own language "the argument that if readers were left to pay for their own books, not only would books be more valued, but the moral discipline involved in the small personal sacrifice incurred by saving for such a purpose would do infinitely more good than any amount of culture obtained at other people's expense." And he takes occasion to suggest that "possibly the advocates of literary pauperism will see little force in" this argument. Possibly; we are not familiar with the train of reasoning which leads to an advocacy of "literary pauperism." For ourselves, we have been accustomed, long before the appearance of Mr. O'Brien's chapter, to attach exceptional importance to the principle which he has here indicated, somewhat awkwardly, to be sure. There can be no doubt that the appreciation of any object is in almost the exact ratio of the effort expended to procure it. This is why teachers and librarians—in American communities, at least—have so often had occasion to rejoice at seeing a taste not only for reading, but for owning books inspired in a young man or woman by access to a noble collection of books for the use of the public. For "owning books," we say; but the limits of a collection so owned are too soon reached in the case of even the best-endowed pockets of individual readers. Were the intelligent teacher who takes an interest in the reading and intellectual growth of the pupils, from the various walks in life represented in our schools, to find a pupil whose interest in pursuing further some lines of thought therein suggested, extended no further than to the books at home on his own book-shelf, we cannot doubt that it would give occasion to question the efficacy of the teaching imparted. Mr. O'Brien's objection to

the enjoyment of these reservoirs of enlightenment, by a portion of the community, where the community as a whole is responsible for their support, is as if a man should be told that he would do well not to walk abroad at night by the light of the public street lamps, but rather enjoy the light kindled in his own house. The latter is certainly important, but not even Mr. O'Brien's reasoning is likely to persuade us that it precludes the former. Mr. O'Brien, in the second place, deeply feels for the reader who, in being brought in contact with the benefits of the library, is, he thinks, subjected to a wrong system of education. To quote his language: "Just at the time when a child is beginning to form his tastes, just at the period when the daily habituation to the simple duties of farm life would lay the foundation both of sound health and practical knowledge, he is taken out of the parent's control, and subjected to a mind-destroying, cramming process, which excludes practical knowledge and creates a dislike for all serious study." One is compelled on reading this extraordinary deliverance to cast one's eye to the heading at the top of the page, "Free Libraries," and ask what this formidable indictment—not one count in which has any bearing on libraries—can mean in this connection. The only conclusion possible is that it was written with a view to appearing in some other chapter of the book.

But Mr. O'Brien's concern is manifested also for the taxpayer who unites in the public support of the library. If we understand him correctly, his contention is that the enormity of this tax consists largely in the reprehensible nature—as represented in his pages—of the institution itself. For from this short chapter one gradually frames a picture of the free library as a place which tramps frequent for sleeping off the effects of dissipation; as a place used by commercial travelers for exhibiting their samples; as a place from which in one instance "a respectable thief took away £20 worth of books"; as a place used in an almost exclusive degree for reading fiction; as a place where the time prescribed for keeping books makes 'serious study' impossible;" and, more serious than all the rest, as a place which, he says, "favors one special section of the community at the expense of all the rest." Let us do Mr. O'Brien the justice to add that for the first three of these counts he gives "chapter and verse" for his charges,



quoting, namely, from various (English) library reports. No one will therefore wish to dispute his well-fortified statement that in such and such an instance an unseemly incident occurred. But even a child can assuredly see the difference between a statement of an isolated occurrence and an inference that it is a necessarily characteristic and inherent quality of the institution in question. Were this latter true, then we might well cry out for abolishing our churches, sidewalks, and railway stations, for in them these very same three things respectively are known at some time to have been done. In the last three of these counts, however, we have only Mr. O'Brien's assertions as the basis, and we are obliged to add also that even these are found to be conflicting. On one page his language shows that he is pained that a certain percentage of readers in the libraries named should prefer to call for works of fiction. Can it be that he has forgotten this, when on another page he cites it as a grievance that "it is a frequent occurrence for a reader to wait for months before he can get the novel he wants"! On page 333, after quoting, from the annual report of one of the English libraries, the statement as to the use of works of fiction, nothing but a resort to italics can sufficiently emphasize his lamentation that "the more instructive books in the other classes circulate only once during the same period." Mr. O'Brien is not the only observer who has failed always to observe, when commenting upon percentages of fiction, that "any book requiring serious study cannot be galloped through, like a novel, in the week or fourteen days allowed for use," yet who would have believed that "out of his own mouth" would he be so completely answered, for this remark, as well as the one which it answers, is found in his decidedly interesting chapter (p. 348). But here it is evident that the bearing of the two upon each other was not in his mind in writing it, for his purpose in the sentence last quoted was plainly to make it appear that the customary regulations of public libraries were such as to render "serious study" impossible.

The limitation of "a week or fourteen days" for a book of the kind which he here indicates—he instances by name Kant's "Critique of pure reason" and Smith's "Wealth of nations"—is practically unknown in American public libraries. In most of those known to the present writer a book of this kind can

be charged in the first instance for fourteen days and then renewed, making twenty-eight days in all, and in still others for a longer period. It can then, after being returned to the library—to give any other reader who may need it a chance at it—be taken out again after remaining on the shelves twenty-four hours, for another twenty-eight days' use by the same reader. The annual report of an American library which lies before us contains a case in point. Speaking of Bryce's "American Commonwealth," it states: "Of this, seven copies were added in succession." It names 101 as the total of the issues of this work during the year; but considering the truth expressed in Mr. O'Brien's own very just words, that "any book requiring serious study cannot be galloped through, like a novel," the statement is added that "such a record, for a book like this, constantly in the hands of readers, may be contrasted with the more than ten times greater number of times that some work of fiction might be read through, returned and taken out again, requiring but a part of a day's attention." In fact, 101 is very likely to be the total number of issues possible in the case of seven copies of this book, while 700 would probably fall far short of the total possible issues of the same number of copies of a story like "The Wreck of the Grosvenor." Again, Mr. O'Brien not only tells us that "a free library favors one special section of the community" at the expense of all the rest, but throughout his chapter recurs again and again to the case of the "workingman." On page 330, for instance, we are solemnly told: "If the workingman cannot come by his books honestly, let him wait until he can." This is indeed somewhat summary, particularly when, being interpreted, it is found to mean, Let there be no free libraries supported by the public. And yet, on page 344, with no less certainty, we are assured that "there is little doubt that at least forty-nine out of every fifty workingmen have no interest whatever in these institutions."

Where the deliverances from one and the same source are so contradictory, the impartial inquirer will doubtless feel like looking for some other source of information. From the materials accessible to the present writer in regard to American libraries—and the new edition of Mr. Greenwood's "Public libraries" appears to tell the same tale in regard to Great Britain—the interest of workingmen in the opportunities af-

forded by public libraries is everywhere emphatically shown; but he who sets out with the purpose of showing that there is any one exclusive class to whom the public library is of service and to no other—be that class workingmen, or students, or manufacturers, or scientists—will find the facts singularly obstinate and unresponsive to his purpose. The truth is—Mr. O'Brien's confident assertion to the contrary—that there is no more "universal" and non-partisan institution than a public library. This is undoubtedly the highest among its several claims to public support. Few among the objects to which the public funds have been appropriated, in American cities, have met with so hearty and unquestioning approval as the public parks, and it is right that it should be so. Yet there are whole classes in every community who not only never do enjoy the public parks, but never care to enjoy them. Even the public schools are for a certain fraction of the population only—the younger portion. In contrast with both of these, the public library extends its resources to the children and the adults alike. Perhaps, however, the fundamentally important question of universality, in the sense of non-partisanship, is one which is seldom appreciated in its full force, as applied to a public library. An independent position, one entirely free from bias, a non-partisan attitude, in fact, is an ideal repeatedly set before the conductors of a school or a newspaper. In both these cases, however, there is too often an element of practical difficulty in carrying these praiseworthy intentions into practice, which is almost completely wanting in the case of a public library. The policy of the latter, is, in its very essence, catholic. It places on its shelves the volumes which represent, not one side, but both, or rather all sides of any subject on which the sentiment of the public divides; and thus, whether the user be Democrat or Republican, protectionist or freetrader, Catholic or Protestant, the aspect which this collection of books presents to him is no less free and uncircumscribed than the illimitable aid.

Again, it is important that the relation of a public library to the question of entertainment should be clearly understood. Entertainment is not an element totally foreign to the purposes of a public library—the same kind of public benefit accrues in this case as in the case of public parks—but in the light of the infinitely more important functions which it ren-

ders, this must of necessity occupy a subordinate place. The primary function of a library is to render a service, to supply a need, to respond to a demand. In this respect its value to the community is of the same description as the postal system, the bank at which one may cash a check, or the reservoir from which one may "turn on" a supply of water.

One of the points which Mr. O'Brien aims to make, and which proceeds from a manifest confusion of thought, can be appropriately noticed here. His contention is that a public library is for the "class" who may be designated "book-readers," that these form but a small percentage of any community, and that therefore it is obviously wrong that the library should receive public support. This is ingenious, as is also his eloquent, though somewhat contemptuous setting of their supposed special needs over against those of others. "Are theatre-goers, lovers of cricket, bicyclists, amateurs of music, and others to have their earnings confiscated," merely that the "book-reader" may gratify his peculiar craving? Like many other ingenious theories, however, it leaves out of account certain fundamentally important bearings of the subject. There can be no doubt that in any community "the book-reader" is not synonymous with the entire population. Some of the population are children in arms; some have never learned to read; the sight of some who have learned has failed; others again are too fully occupied to find time for it; others find their inclination drawn more strongly in other directions; others still have more or less to do with reading, yet are not, in the strict sense, "book-readers." Yet we shall err very widely if we lose sight of the fact that even those who do not personally perform the role of the "book-reader" do nevertheless benefit by the existence of the library, by proxy. The young child is read to, by his mother; or is cared for by her, by methods learned through her use of books. The busy "captain of industry," whose large profits are due to a skillful application of scientific principles, may find his own time so closely occupied by details of administration that, personally, he seldom opens the treatises which bear upon the subject, but he expects to keep abreast of the ever unfolding science, by the consultation not only of such works as private ownership may provide, but the more nearly complete collection in a great public library.

This principle of "community of interest" and interde-

pendence has an even wider bearing; for it applies not only to the family and the business firm, but to the community as a whole. A public library report now before the writer contains several instances of this kind. Speaking of the systematic efforts made to build up an approximately complete collection of works on industrial and decorative subjects, the report states that in this way "the library is gradually becoming the possessor of a scientifically selected set of volumes and plates which cannot fail to leave a distinct impress on the character of the work done in the various industries of the city." Another portion of the same report illustrates the direct service rendered by such an institution to the interests of the municipality. To quote the language there used, "Instances of the last named, both striking and tangible, are of by no means exceptional occurrence, sometimes an application of this kind being presented from more than one city official on the same day," the foregoing having reference to the city in question. "A well-authenticated instance," it continues, "in one of the largest cities of the country, of the saving of a sum of many thousand dollars, in the matter of a contract, due to the opportunity for consulting the requisite data comprised in works of authority in the public library of that city, is but an indication of the possibilities of a public library."

It is fitting that where funds are to be appropriated, collected by taxes levied on the tax-paying population, there should be possible so tangible a presentation as the above, of the direct relation of the institution supported, to the question of "profit and loss," as affecting those who are taxed. And yet it is well to remember that it is as true now as twenty centuries ago, that "man does not live by bread alone;" and that the public support of the institutions referred to can be justified by other arguments than that of the material interests just cited.

No aspect of the library's operation is more full of interest than that which takes account of its uplifting influence. The analogy between its service and that of the postal system has been noticed; but it has a no less real analogy to the work of the school, the pulpit, or the press—yet without the propagandist principle which so often attaches to these latter—namely, in the principle of growth or advance. In the earlier portion of this paper a little space was devoted to showing that in the nature of the case the number of copies of any work of fiction used in the course of a year would immensely out-number those which



could possibly be read in the more solid departments of reading. Even were the constituency of the library confined to a selected few, to whose minds the higher class of reading was congenial, this would be the case. Nor should we forget that the ground of distinction between a "public" library and any other, as the library of a scientific society, a debating society, a theological school or a teachers' club, is that its constituency is not thus limited to a selected class but is broad as humanity itself, with all its enormous inequalities of condition, taste, and mental growth. Like a mirror, therefore, the recorded classified circulation reflects this variety. Even with this apparently almost unmanageable unevenness, appreciable improvement in standards of reading is by no means an unknown experience. There lies before the writer, for instance, a library report which is able to make such a statement as this: "The fiction percentages of the seven successive years, beginning with 1883 and ending with 1889, show an uninterrupted decline, as follows: 70+, 66+, 62+, 61+, 58+, 56+." But it must be remembered also that figures such as these, though they may tell a part, and a very gratifying part, of the advances which individual readers have been helped to make, fall very far short of expressing the whole. It would be entirely possible for individual after individual thus to advance from good to better, and from better to best, and yet the figures which express the aggregate use of the year remain stationary (or even retrograde), because the constituency of a public library (particularly in a large city) is all the time being reenforced by new readers. And these new readers comprise both those who are children in age and those who are children in mental growth, who begin at the foot. When, therefore, there is anything more than a preserving of a uniform level—as in the noteworthy figures above quoted—it stands for a very striking advance indeed, on the part of a very large portion of the community. Probably every librarian in charge of a public library in a large city has had an opportunity of observing these advances in innumerable individual instances. And this class of results, while distinctly following the "order of nature," does not by any means come about through a view of library administration which regards either books, readers, or librarian as inert masses. Much of it is the result of individual interest expressed by the librarian in some reader, whose mind receives an awakening impulse.



More than one well authenticated instance exists of an individual beginning life as a newsboy or an elevator-boy, and through his use of a public library finding his intellectual powers unfolding until he has entered one of the learned professions. The relation of the library system to the school system opens an almost boundless field of thought, and it is a fact of deep significance that the profound principle involved in it, after having engaged the attention of English and American libraries for years, has been recognized in the educational steps recently taken by the government of Japan, where the two systems are placed on a plane of equality. In the experience of one of the American libraries already referred to, almost the chief hope of the library for the future is placed upon "a class of readers," every year largely increasing in numbers, who comprise the "graduates from the various institutions of learning" in the city, and whose "lines of study and reading" "may be characterized as a carrying forward of those impulses in the direction of right reading which were received in school and college." The library has a no less direct relation to the needs and ambitions of those who have received the invaluable training of "the practical duties of the world," to use Mr. O'Brien's phrase, and it responds with equal readiness to these. There is concentrated in the contemporary phrase, "book-learning," a popular judgment of condemnation which is for the most part just, on the spurious variety of knowledge which knows the expression of certain principles in books, but knows nothing of their practical embodiment in the life and work of this world. We are glad to observe that Mr. O'Brien's antipathy to this pseudo-knowledge is almost as profound as our own, but his expression of it seems singularly out of place in a philippic against public libraries; for one will seek far before finding an institution more perfectly suited to be a corrective of such a tendency than the modern public library. Does any one claim that the public school system sometimes has an unfortunate tendency to repress individuality and turn out a set of pupils of uniform mould? If so, the public library supplies a means of supplementing and complementing this uniformity by its infinite variety and universality, and it is continually doing this, indeed. Does any one regret that the school system at its best reaches but a fraction of the population and that fraction for but a few short years of their life, and that in too many instances there is a tendency on the part of even these

few, educated in the schools, to conceive of their education as "finished," and allow the fabric to become hopelessly ravelled? If so, the public library stands to these members of the community in an almost ideal relation, not only fulfilling very perfectly Mr. Carlyle's characterization of a "collection of books" as "the people's university," but in the peculiarly wide range shown in the demands made upon it, almost as properly rendering it the people's workshop, or laboratory.

The same library report which has several times been cited printed several years since a record of the inquiries made on specific subjects during a single month, which throws significant light upon this subject. Another report of the same library declares that "few can adequately conceive to what extent the inquiries made at the library have become specialized, and require trained facility and research" on the part of the library staff. The library thus becomes a laboratory, in which the reader gains not only the specific information, but the method.

An observation of popular movements in their relation to political or economic principles reveals few facts so plainly as that an almost insuperable narrowness of view is, in much the greater number of instances, the barrier to advance in those questions decided mainly by the popular voice. Why then should any one wish to perpetuate the conditions which make this possible? In Mr. O'Brien's view the workingman,—and we ought not to forget how large a percentage of the community this word "workingman" represents, both in England and America,—will be a fortunate man when the contents of free libraries are no longer rendered everywhere accessible to him by public support, for then the workingmen "for one 'penny' can buy their favorite newspaper, which can be carried in the pocket and read at any time"! It is well nigh incredible that an ideal such as this should be looked forward to by thinking men. Whatever may be the fact in regard to the workingmen of Great Britain,—and Mr. O'Brien of course knows them better than we do,—it may confidently be asserted that the American workingman would strike no such false note. Mr. Lowell in one of his admirable orations quotes from a Wallachian legend of a peasant who was "taken up into heaven" and offered his choice among the objects to be seen there. He chose a half worn-out bagpipe, and with this returned to the earth. "With an infinite possibility within his reach, with the choice of wisdom, of power, of beauty,

at his tongue's end, he asked according to his kind, and his sordid wish is answered with a gift as sordid." The newspaper is well enough in its way,—even a "penny newspaper,"—but to condemn whole masses of the population to limit themselves to this, is to incur the condemnation of Mr. Lowell's fine scorn when, in another portion of the oration just referred to, he says: "It is we who, while we might each in his humble way be helping our fellows into the right path, or adding one block to the climbing spire of a fine soul, are willing to become mere sponges saturated from the stagnant goose-pond of village gossip." It is more. It is to help develop a community from whom in the end every spark of uplifting influence shall have vanished. Does any one say that this is a result impossible of attainment by any people? The scientifically true, yet brutally summary record given by the distinguished European savant, Elisée Reclus, of a certain European stock which has found and occupied virgin soil in the South of Africa, is a sufficient answer. "In general," he says, "the Boers despise everything that does not contribute directly to the material prosperity of the family group. They ignore music, the arts, literature, all refining influence, and find little pleasure in anything," except solid amassing of wealth.

A few additional points remain to be noted. It is an entirely pertinent question whether every public library in England and America improves its high privilege, uses to the full the peculiar opportunities open to it, places itself in close communication with the public school system, with the university extension movement, and with the influences continually at work in industrial and artistic development. And we need not hesitate to answer in the negative. Yet the significant fact is, that everywhere the tendency is in this direction with a stronger and stronger momentum. The advance made in this country, within the last decade even, in this direction, is among the most striking phenomena of the time; and no less striking is the almost overwhelming percentage of the body of librarians in this country whose entrance upon the work from a deep-seated love for it, rather than as furnishing a means of livelihood, supplies one of the strongest guarantees against the invasion of the perfunctory spirit in the future. Again, it is equally pertinent to ask whether, granted that the benefits of such an institution as the public library are unquestioned, dependence may not be placed

on funds entirely unconnected with those of the public, for its support. It would ill become the citizen of a country where private munificence has accomplished so much in channels of public spirit, to overlook these noble memorials of enlightened private action. Yet it remains true, nevertheless, that were dependence to be placed on these alone, a map of the country on which public libraries should be dotted down would show as partial and inadequate a supply furnished to the community, as the very instructive "annual rainfall map" published by the government shows in the matter of rain. What we are accustomed, in the eastern portion of this country, to consider the rain—in its universal beneficent service and in its indispensableness—that also is to be associated with the "reservoirs" comprised in these public collections of books. For, after all, valuable as are the books themselves, even in their material aspect, as pieces of handiwork, still more in the specific items of information and admonition contained in them, yet in the deeper view these are but symbols of their real significance and service. To place one's self in communication with them as contained in these libraries, is to bring ourselves in contact with the stored-up thought of the world thus far. We have just adverted to the fundamental bearing which this has upon the deeper or spiritual side of man's life. But the two-sided character of these collections of books follows us even here, for their indispensableness in the material point of view is almost as striking, and this, not only whether we consider the statesman planning measures of public weal, while neglecting to inform himself of the recorded conditions which necessarily must determine such measures; or whether it be the inventor spending long years of his too brief life in perfecting a machine which his consultation of the recorded patent would have shown him some one else had anticipated him in thinking out; or whether it be the day laborer submitting without an effort to violations of his rights, which a single glance at the recorded statutes would have shown him he had a remedy for.

How like all this is to the supposed state of things which one of the most suggestive writers of our day has thus expressed: "Our early voyagers are dead: not a plank remains of the old ships that first essayed unknown waters; the sea retains no track; and were it not for the history of these voyages contained in charts, in chronicles, in hoarded lore of all kinds, each

voyager, though he were to start with all the aids of advanced civilization," would be in the helpless position of the earliest voyager.

Once more, each reader of the strongly written book which we have been considering should ask the question for himself, whether all of the various propositions maintained therein necessarily stand or fall together. Because the compiler has chosen to bracket together two such headings as "Free libraries" and "The state and electrical distribution," it certainly does not follow that the argument which carries conviction in the one case must in the other also. We shall not be suspected of having our judgment in this regard swayed by the natural weakness with which, to use Mr. O'Brien's illustration, the shoemaker is inclined to think that "there is nothing like leather," if we suggest, what the public at large in this country is very plainly persuaded of, that, for one person who has appreciated the need for public action in the latter case there are thousands in the former. The writer lives in a city in which for more than eleven years the public library was administered by funds not in the least degree derived from municipal appropriations. Yet the character of its service to the public had so widely impressed itself upon the community that, largely from sources outside of the library board, a movement arose for recognizing the closeness of the relation, by public support. A report by a committee of the city government, recommending this course, significantly declares: "Your committee are unanimously of the opinion that this public library, already existing in the city, is a useful and a necessary adjunct to the educational system sustained by the city in its public schools, and properly appeals to the treasury for an appropriation towards its support." After eleven years' opportunity for observation and comparison, such a judgment as this has the merit of deliberation and conviction.

It is true that by far the greater part of the considerations which lead the present writer to find Mr. O'Brien's view untenable are drawn from observation and experience of conditions existing in this country. Yet it is to be noted that his position is also contested, so far as Great Britain is concerned, by an article in the March number of *The Library* (of London), which shows, not only that our English cousins are fully able to take care of themselves, but also that on many of the questions of fact, about which his arguments turn, he is painfully



wide of the mark. Few students of social conditions have left so noteworthy an impress on contemporary thought as the late William Stanley Jevons. Of the free public library he held a view radically opposed to that of Mr. O'Brien, believing it to be "an engine for operating upon" the community, in ways at once protective and ennobling. As to the universality of its beneficent service, he was equally convinced, declaring not only that "free libraries are engines for creating the habit and power of enjoying high-class literature, and thus carrying forward the work of civilization which is commenced in the primary school," but also that they are "classed with town halls, police courts, prisons, and poor-houses, as necessary adjuncts of our stage of civilization." The experience of one community or one nation is repeatedly serviceable to another; but, after all, it is the local conditions which must finally determine in any case. Even if a different conclusion were to be reached in this matter in Great Britain, it would still remain true that for us in America it is one of the highest duties of self-preservation to keep alive the uplifting influences represented in the public support of these institutions. The future of this country, even more than its past, will be irrevocably committed to the democratic principle in government. As is the people—in the widest sense of the word—so will be the national life and character. In the future, even more than in the past, crudity, narrowness, well-meaning ignorance, and low standards of taste and ethics will, unless met with corrective tendencies, color our national life. The public school and the public library—"instruments equal in power to the Dionysiac theatre, and vastly greater in their range of power," to quote the language of one of the most thoughtful of our men of letters—will stand more and more, in our American communities, as such corrective tendencies.



## PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE PUBLIC

One of the first clear statements of the Public Library as a business enterprise, involving certain amounts invested by a city with the expectation of certain definite returns. The paper refers particularly to the San Francisco Public Library, of which the author, Frederic Beecher Perkins, was then librarian but its conclusions are general, and hold good to-day. It was read at the Lake George Conference of the American Library Association, in September, 1885.

Frederic Beecher Perkins was born in Hartford, Conn., Sept. 27, 1828, a grandson of Lyman Beecher. He left Yale in sophomore year to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1851, but graduated at the State Normal School in 1852 and devoted himself to literary and educational work. In 1880-87 he was librarian of the San Francisco Public Library. He died in Morristown, N. J., Jan. 27, 1899. He was the father of Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

There are in the United States about 5,000 public libraries of 300 volumes or more. Returns of their present conditions are very imperfect, and must therefore be summed in the following crude way:—

Annual cost much more than .....	\$1,500,000
The books in them are many more than .....	13,000,000
Books added yearly are many more than .....	500,000
Books used yearly are many more than .....	10,000,000

These institutions, therefore, represent a large money investment, and a very extensive and active educational agency. Not all of them by any means are "free public libraries,"—i.e., libraries supported by taxes or endowments for the use of all.

But a considerable portion of them are. It may now be justly said that no town of importance is respectably complete without a free public library any more than any town whatever without a school.

The San Francisco Free Public Library was founded in 1879, and was advancing with creditable speed towards a size and usefulness corresponding to the position of San Francisco, among American cities, until the present city government suddenly cut down its annual appropriation to bare running expenses, leaving no allowance for buying new books, or even for replacing old ones worn out.

This library is not a collection of mummies of deceased learning, which will be no drier in a thousand years than they are now. It has thus far consisted of live books for live people. But a library of this practically useful kind, if it stops buying new books, quickly becomes dead stock,—unattractive, obsolete, useless. In *belles-lettres*, literature, history, mechanic arts, engineering, applied science, all alike, it is equally indispensable to have the new books. The photographer, the druggist, the electrician, the machinist, the manufacturing chemist, as much as or more than the reader of novels, poetry, travels, or history, want this year's discoveries, for last year's are already obsolete. Next year it will not be Mr. Blaine's book that will be most called for,—that will be a year old,—but General Grant's book. But a thousand examples would not make the case clearer. This prohibition of new books, perhaps on pretence of economy, would be the natural first step of shrewd opponents intending to close the library entirely as soon as the books are dead enough. It is girdling the tree now, so as to destroy it more early next year. It is understood that at least two prominent members of the present city government (Supervisor Pond and Auditor Strother) are distinctly opposed to the library, and to free public libraries, on principle. It is not known that any member of it is a particularly energetic friend of the institution. The library staff is small in number (seven boys and eight adults); the salaries (omitting the librarian's) exceptionally scanty, and even this small patronage and expenditure is wholly controlled by the Board of Trustees, and wholly out of reach of the Board of Supervisors. When this is remembered it is easy to understand both the probable firmness of any opposition, and the probable lukewarmness of any friendship to the library in

the latter body. This is perfectly natural. All governing bodies try to keep and increase their authority over persons and payments. They never let go of them when they can help it. And, accordingly, the Supervisors insisted on controlling all the expenditure and management of the library, until a decision of the Supreme Court of the State forced the control out of their hands.

Whether the actual closing of the library is intended or not, the obvious first step towards it has been taken, and its closing will follow in due season, if the policy is continued. If the voters of San Francisco choose to have it so, there is no more to be said, for it is their library. Probably they could lawfully divide up the books among themselves, and so close out the enterprise. The dividend, now, would be not far from one volume to each household in the city. But, if they wish the library to continue, this early notice is due them.

Further: the custom here, in respect to the contents of municipal public documents, prevents such discussions of library questions as are usual in the annual reports of other city libraries; so that, if a view of principles and practices in and about such institutions as a class, and of their application in this instance, is to be laid before the public at all, it must be submitted, as in this paper, unofficially.

The following table shows the financial, and some of the literary, relations between public libraries and cities in San Francisco, in four other large cities, and in six small cities. The cases were taken promiscuously as they came to hand, of the latest dates available, but all are within a few years. New York has no free public library; movements to establish one there have repeatedly been contemplated, but have been abandoned, because the men who could have set up the library would not encounter the practical certainty of its becoming one more corruptionist engine in the hands of the city rulers. Philadelphia has none, for reasons not known to the present writer, but, very likely, the same as in New York. St. Louis has none now, although its excellent Public School Library may, very likely, become one. New Orleans has none, apparently, because it doesn't want any. Louisville has none, because the devil cannot set up a true church; the enormous lottery swindle which was worked off there a few years ago was ostensibly to establish and endow one, but where did the money go?

Cities	Population (1880)	Assessed Value in Millions (1880)	Whole City Tax	Gives its Library	Being, of whole tax	Vols. in Library	Vols. per soul (about)	Circulation per year	Being per soul (about)	And per \$1.00 of salaries	Volumes added yearly
Boston.....	362,000	\$613	\$7,261,741	\$120,000	1/60	438,594	1 1/5	1,056,906	3	14	16,478
Chicago.....	503,000	118	3,776,451	54,330	1/75	111,621	1/5+	664,867	1 1/3	23 1/4	5,280
Cincinnati.....	255,139	169 1/3	4,070,225	49,016	1/82	153,870	3/5+	730,544	3	26 1/6	4,120
Lynn.....	38,274	22 1/2	332,481	5,730	1/58	32,006	4/5	90,330	2 1/3	36	1,264
Milwaukee.....	115,587	55 3/4	902,537	17,697	1/51	24,481	1/5	83,052	3/4	16	2,778
New Bedford....	26,875	25 3/4	390,208	5,148	1/76	45,000	1 4/5	71,798	3	.....	2,448
Newburyport.....	13,537	7 1/2	105,686	1,661	1/64	17,828	1 1/3	.....	.....	.....	441
Springfield, Mass..	33,340	29 1/2	307,434	8,231	1/37	48,832	1 1/2	57,152	1 3/4	14 3/4	1,797
Taunton.....	21,213	15 3/4	213,912	5,195	1/41	21,197	1	58,920	2 9/10	31 1/2	1,971
Worcester.....	58,291	39 1/2	557,193	14,860	1/38	61,204	1+	194,321	3 1/3	26 6/7	3,105
San Francisco....	233,959	225	2,252,000	18,000	1/125	62,647	1/4+	326,000	1 1/4	36	*3,883

\* Next year NONE except gifts.

The six small cities tabulated are all in Massachusetts, because the latest and fullest reports came to hand from them.

Of various comparisons which could be formulated from the above figures, the following are the most pertinent now:—

(1) Of the five large cities listed, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Milwaukee give from one fifty-first part to one eighty-second part of their tax levies for their libraries; San Francisco, one one-hundred and twenty-fifth part.

(2) Of the actual sums so set apart by these cities, Boston, with half as many more people, gives nearly seven times as much; Chicago, with twice as many, gives three times as much; Cincinnati, with one-tenth more gives two and two-thirds times as much; Milwaukee, with one-half as many, gives nearly as much (\$300 less).

(3) Accordingly, San Francisco would expend every year for its library, if it were as liberal as Boston, about \$84,000; if as liberal as Chicago, \$27,000; and so on.

(4) The actual comparative size of their libraries is: Boston seven times as large as San Francisco; Chicago nearly twice; Cincinnati twice and a half; Milwaukee only is smaller, being somewhat more than one-third as large.

(5) The rate of increase is: from 16,478 volumes a year at Boston, to 2,778 at Milwaukee; and in San Francisco, for the coming year none (for the loss in worn-out volumes will more than equal any probable total of gifts), none at all.

(6) The number of volumes circulated in a year for each dollar of salaries paid is in San Francisco more than twice as great as in Boston or Milwaukee, and decidedly larger than in Chicago or Cincinnati. It may be added, although the figures are not in this table, that a much more striking evidence of the stringent economy of the library administration here is the fact that there is paid at the Boston Public Library in salaries, in the cataloging department alone, without allowing anything for printing, nearly as much as the whole of this year's library appropriation by the city of San Francisco.

(7) Similar comparisons with the six smaller cities listed would give results generally similar, but showing a still more liberal rate per head and dollar of expenditure for libraries.

In addition to this exposition of comparative parsimony a feature of it should be remembered which might easily escape notice: that, while the money for running expenses is all gone

at the end of the year, nearly all of the allowance above running expenses remains represented by valuable property. Thus, if the year's allowance for this library had been \$28,000, instead of \$18,000, it would not have cost a cent more to run the library and at the year's end about \$10,000 worth of books would remain added to the permanent property of the city.

Another result of this policy is to prevent printing any catalogue of the recent additions to the library; so that there is practically no access, and there will, for the present, continue to be none, even for the public who own the books, to all additions to this library since June, 1884, being several thousand titles. It is needless to point out that if there were to be the hypothesis of an unfriendly purpose entertained against the library, that purpose would be served as directly by suppressing the names of books in the library as by preventing the addition of new ones, or by the replacing of those worn out.

These brief statements sufficiently show what our city is doing, and what other cities are doing, for or against public libraries. It is not within the scope of this paper to inquire after the real reason for the stop put to the progress of the San Francisco Free Public Library. One hypothesis is, that, instead of any unfriendly intention against the library itself, the step was taken to help in persuading the public that the "dollar limit" to the rate of city taxation is too low, and that our citizens must submit to a higher rate. As the money saved is only \$6,000, the economy is not great in itself, being about one four-hundredth part of the city tax levy. If the proposed effect was expected to be produced by continuously annoying and dissatisfying the citizens there is more reason in the scheme; for the library is frequented by more than a thousand persons daily; between 26,000 and 27,000 cards have been issued to authorize the home use of books; and there are always at any given moment from 5,900 to 6,000 volumes from the library in use in as many homes all over the city. To inconvenience and disoblige so large a constituency as this may naturally produce some effect. This paper need not attempt to decide whether that effect would naturally be approval or disapproval of the treatment of the library, enthusiasm in favor of, or against, the proposed increase of taxation, unpopularity or popularity of the institution itself, or of those whose action so effectually cripples its usefulness. Nor will it discuss the still larger question of the



"dollar limit" itself,<sup>1</sup> however decisively important all these inquiries are for the future of the library, and however interesting and clear the arguments and conclusions on those subjects may be. But what it may properly do is, to state, without any pretence of novelty, but simply in order to refresh the public memory, the chief heads of a doctrine of her public libraries from a practical point of view.

First (to limit the discussion). What a free public library is *not* for.

It is not for a nursery; a lunch-room; a bed-room; a place for meeting a girl in a corner and talking to her; a conversation-room of any kind; a free dispensary of stationery, envelopes, and letter-writing; a free range for loiterers; a campaigning field for mendicants, or for displaying advertisements; a haunt for loafers and criminals. Indeed, not to specify with inelegant distinctness, a free public library, like any other similarly commodious place of free public resort, would, if permitted, be used for any purpose whatever, no matter how private or how vicious, which could be served there more conveniently than by going to one's own home, or than by having any home at all. It would be so used systematically, constantly, and to a degree of intolerable nuisance; and its purification from such uses, if they have been set up, will be met with clamor, abuse, and with any degree and kind of even violent resistance which may be thought safe, or likely to succeed. Let it not be supposed that this is an imaginary picture. It is in every point taken from actual and numerous instances, and could be illustrated by a sufficiently ridiculous series of single adventures, by any librarian of large experience. Open public premises for some of the purposes above specified might conceivably be properly supplied by the public. What is here affirmed is, that public libraries are not at present proper for them.

Second. What such a library *is* for.

Its first object is to supply books to persons wishing to improve their knowledge of their occupations. Such books as Nicholson's, Burns', Riddell's, Tredgold's, Dwyer's, Waring's, Holly's, and others, on practical architecture, building, or departments of them; the numerous collections of plans and de-

<sup>1</sup> San Francisco is at present taxed on a precise scale of one dollar to the hundred dollars of value, and on an annual total valuation of \$200,000,000, which is, however, in practice somewhat, but not largely, exceeded.

tails of domestic and other architecture; Masury's house-painting; Kittredge's metal-worker's pattern-book; Percy's, Phillips', and other books on metallurgy and mining; Dussance, Piesse, and others on soap-making, perfumery, and other branches of applied chemistry; Lock on sugar-refining; many manuals of brewing and distilling; Noad, Hospitalier, Preece, etc., on applications of electricity; Burgh's, Roper's, and other hand-books and more advanced works on steam engineering generally, locomotives, marine engines, etc.; Gaskell's, Hill's, and other business manuals; hand-books of correspondence, book-keeping, phonography; in short, text-books, both elementary and advanced, in all sorts of commercial and industrial occupations, are of the first importance in a free public library, and are constantly and eagerly used in this one. The study of such books puts money directly into the student's pocket, promotes his success in life, and the prosperity of the city. A good and active public library raises the value of every piece of real estate in the city, by thus making the city more profitable (in dollars) to live in; because it enables the intelligent and studious to earn more.

Second in importance is the supply of books to those who wish to acquire or pursue an education, or to complete or continue a knowledge of general literature; and, third, the accommodation of students working out special lines of research.

Fourth. Such is the more solid usefulness of a public library. The rest of its distributing work, whatever its intrinsic usefulness, is at least as indispensable, and is always numerically the most popular. This is the supply of light literature to readers for rest or amusement. Whether books of this class constitute one-half the library or (as in this one) one-tenth of it, it may be depended on that from one-half to four-fifths of all the reading done will be done from that part. The justification of the supply of such books by a free public library is, that it is important also, if not likewise, to afford mental relaxation, as it is to feed mental effort; that even light reading is a very important improvement over and safe-guard from street life and saloon life; that such books introduce to a more useful class of books by forming the habit of reading; and that the public, who pay for the library, choose to have books of this sort as much as, if not even rather more than, the more useful sort.

Fifth. There is another department of usefulness for public libraries, quite unknown until within a few years, which makes them actual and vital members of the public-school system, and

additionally justifies the term "People's Universities," which has often been applied to them. This is the arrangement at the library of courses of illustrative study and reading for teachers or pupils, or both. A series of such books as relate to one or another part of the school course is laid out at the library; the teachers, and perhaps sometimes one of the higher classes, examine them along with the librarian, and such information as they afford is used to fill out and illustrate the outline in the school-book for the fuller information of the pupils.

This practice is perhaps easiest in history and geography. It is easy to see how a capable teacher could intensify the interest and enrich the minds of a class about the geography of the East Indian archipelago, by introducing them to the vivid narrative and abundant illustrations of Wallace's most entertaining and instructive book on that region. How, for instance, Palgrave's "Year in Arabia," Palmer's "Desert of the Exodus," Lady Duff Gordon's "Letters from Egypt," O'Donovan's "Merv Oasis," Atkinson's and Kennan's books on Siberia, Huc's "Travels in Tartary and in China," and hundreds of other books, each for its locality, all over the world, could be used to give a child clear notions and strong impressions of savage or civilized landscapes and people. It is not too much to say that the study of geography in the public schools of San Francisco, illustrated as it could easily be from books of travel now in the public library, could be made from beginning to end as fascinating as any romance, while it would store the children's minds with a kind and quantity of distinct knowledge about the earth and its people as much beyond the results of ordinary geographical study as gold is better than mud. It would be easy to furnish similar specifications for the study of history, of natural science, and other branches. This is no mere speculation. This system of instruction is regularly practised by Mr. Green, of the Worcester Free Library (the originator and pioneer in it); by Mr. Poole at Chicago, and elsewhere, and with complete success. Besides its immediate result in vivifying and enriching the pupil's minds, this method affords a training in habits of reading of the very best kind, by teaching research, the habit of selecting books, and the practice of comparative thinking.

To sum up: A free public library—

1. As to manners—is a parlor, not a bar-room; a place where not only working men and business men, but ladies and

young girls can safely and conveniently come and abide. While not expressly a school of manners and morals, it is much and closely concerned in maintaining a high standard in both.

2. As to objects—is to furnish good books, not bad ones; to satisfy within this limit all demands on it as far as may be; and in particular to be progressive; that is, to supply for intelligent readers what they most require,—the *new* good books.

3. As to method—should keep the books in the best possible condition for the longest possible term of use, and should not allow them to be scattered, lost, abused, mutilated, or stolen.

Lastly. It is needless to add, under these heads, any of the numerous technical details which crowd the work of an active library; but this exposition would be inexcusably imperfect without a reference to the absolute indispensableness of proper quarters in order to successful library administration. Only the merest reference need now be made to the professional immorality of notorious localities close around this library in its present place. Something more may be said of the unbusinesslike payment by the city of a heavy insurance on \$50,000 worth of its property, which must be paid, because the library is in the same building with a theatre. Theatres burn down on an average once in seventeen years; and a theatre risk, although not absolutely uninsurable like a gunpowder mill, is what insurance men call "extra hazardous;" so that not only is the insurance rate high, but the destruction by fire of the library (in its present location) may be looked upon as certain, the only question being, How soon?

A difficulty less obvious and less dangerous, but still a source of constant friction and annoyance, is the present arrangement of the library as one collection, with but one place for delivering books. In a small library, with a small business, this difficulty becomes nothing; but in one as large and as energetically active as this it is a serious disadvantage. Such a library imperatively requires division into two libraries or sections, one to contain all books deliverable without discrimination; the other, all books calling for special care and precaution of any kind. The receipt and delivery desks of these two sections should be separate, and before and behind them there should be plenty of room. In the present library, which is in one large undivided hall, the space is insufficient, both for the public and for the library staff; and books of the two classes above described are intermingled all

over the shelves. The result is, crowding, interruption, delay, error, confusion, and dissatisfaction. Very many books might be trusted with a studious mechanic or a literary student which it would be a folly to deliver into the hands of a small boy or girl. Many other extremely desirable objects would be gained by the occupancy of properly arranged library quarters; but of these only two need be mentioned here; separate quarters could be provided for students who need special facilities and assistance, and there could be such arrangements that ladies using the library need not crowd and struggle about among impatient children and miscellaneous masculine strangers.





## THE LEVY OF LIBRARY TRIBUTE

The above title was constructed by the editor from a sentence in the presidential address of Henry M. Utley before the American Library Association at its Denver conference of 1895. President Utley himself gave it no title, but it is an examination of the claims of the library to public support, with a conclusion that those claims are justified only by regarding the library as an educational institution, using this term in its broadest sense.

Henry Munson Utley was born at Plymouth, Mich., Aug. 5, 1836. He served on the staff of the *Detroit Free Press* in 1861-66, was city editor of the *Post* and *Post-Tribune* until 1881, and then, after holding the secretaryship of the Detroit Board of Education, became in 1885 librarian of the Public Library, in which post he served until his death on Feb. 16, 1917, becoming librarian emeritus in 1913.

We are met for the seventeenth Conference of the American Library Association in the Capital city of the Centennial State. It is a pleasing co-incidence that the Association and the State celebrate the same natal year. Within the memory of some of us the whole region of which this city is now the metropolis was a wilderness. The century was fairly begun when Lieut. Pike led his little band to the sources of the Arkansas and made his futile attempt to scale the lofty peak which now bears his name. Forty years later came the explorations of Fremont, and then fifteen years elapsed before the tide of immigration set in. The desert of that day has been converted into prosperous farms. Thriving towns have sprung up in the mountain fastnesses, at the gateway to which sits this Queen City of the plains, display-

ing all the evidences of wealth, culture, and refinement to be found in the proud cities to the eastward.

This rapid and wonderful transformation has been the work of human hands guided by intelligent brains and an indomitable spirit of pluck and perseverance. We are accustomed to think of this combination as purely American. In many of its characteristics it certainly is so. And in no respect more distinctively so than in the cause in which we are most interested. Not all the older commonwealths, even on this side of the Atlantic, have yet accepted the theory that the education of the citizen is the concern of the state. But in all this newer portion of our country this doctrine has been incorporated into the fundamental law. The ordinance of 1787 for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio river declared that for obvious reasons schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged. The twenty states now organized within this and the subsequently acquired territory to the westward have all accepted to the fullest extent the doctrine of the ordinance. They have not only carried it into practical effect by general laws providing for free public schools for children, for universities and institutions of higher learning for the education of youth, but have also provided for the establishment and maintenance of free public libraries at the general expense and for the common use of all the people.

Let us consider very briefly the theory upon which the state assumes to levy tribute upon the property of individuals to provide means for maintaining libraries. By what right does the state tax the man of wealth to put miscellaneous books into the hands of the man who pays no tax?

So far as primary education is concerned, the basis seems clear. The free state which depends for its very existence upon the intelligence of the masses of its citizens must, as a measure of self-defense, provide the facilities by which all may become intelligent. Self-preservation is the supremest natural law. Whatever has a right to exist has a right to do that which is necessary to preserve its existence. The free state which rests on the suffrage of its citizens is bound in duty to itself to see to it that popular education, which is essential to its perpetuity, is universal. Ignorant men are not competent to take care of themselves and their households, still less to direct the destinies of an empire. The state has, therefore, the right, not only to

provide the means of education, but to compel education. Laws are in force which require certain attendance upon the schools. These rest on the theory that the interest of the state in the education of the individual surpasses that of the individual, and therefore, the state cannot, in justice to itself, treat education purely as a matter of individual concern.

It is a notorious fact that the average person does not perceive the importance of self-cultivation. As the vineyard left to itself is soon choked out with weeds and chapparall, so man if left to himself lapses naturally into his primitive condition. The state cannot leave him to himself, but must interpose to make it certain that he acquires the best degree of information which his natural abilities and the time not necessary to his self-support shall permit. Neither can the state leave the matter of providing facilities and inducements to education to private enterprise, nor to the church, which has been the foremost of all organizations to appreciate its importance. While the state recognizes these agencies and accepts them as satisfactory, so far as they go, it nevertheless fully equips schools of its own, in pursuance of its inherent right and duty, which cannot be relinquished to any other agency.

The extent to which the state shall go in the matter of educating its citizens has been the subject of much discussion. There are those who maintain that as the education of the individual proceeds his concern in his own development increases, until finally, if his education proceeds far enough, his concern in his own development surpasses that of the state, and he must thenceforth be left to equip himself entirely at his own expense. If that point is marked by the line between primary and secondary, or between secondary and higher education, there is where the state is in duty bound to stop. The extent of the interest of the community as compared with that of the individual is held to grow less and less and finally to disappear as he advances.

But the better judgment of our time repudiates this theory, and holds apparently that there is no limit to the concern of the state in the mental progress of the individual. Ian Maclaren in his touching story of "Domsie" quotes John Knox as saying: "Ilka scholar is something added to the riches of the commonwealth." It can probably be demonstrated by the rules of accounts that as a business investment the state is wisely spending money in the education of the people. The cost is more than re-

turned to it in the material development which an enlightened citizenship ensures. If we contrast our own country, where education is free, with some older countries where it is yet held to be a matter of minor concern, or if we contrast some of the states of this republic with others of corresponding age, we shall see at a glance a wide difference in material resources and prosperity. In one the industrial arts are far advanced, there is intellectual activity, the average citizen is well clothed, well housed, and enjoys many luxuries; in the other, the methods and life of a past century prevail and poverty and ill-living are the rule. This, if not the highest motive, is an incidental one of considerable importance for doing at the common expense that which is for the common good.

But the maintenance of the public library is not based on the communistic idea. A former president of this association, speaking at the Lake George Conference, said: "The socialists and communists are all friends of the library, for we give them the books they want, and they hold that it is not only the duty of the government to educate the people, but to furnish them with reading. If the library ever shall have enemies they will be the rich, who do not enjoy being taxed for the benefit of the public, and have libraries of their own. Its defenders will be men of broad views, scholarly people, and behind them, with votes, the middle and poorer classes."

While it may be true, in a certain sense, that socialists and communists approve the public library because it appears to give them something which they desire at the public cost, that scheme, on its true ground, is as far removed as possible from any such theory of maintenance by the state. The essential principle of communism is that the members of the community shall hold their property in common for the common use and benefit. This principle flourished in the village community in which each individual was allotted his certain proportion of the lands owned in common. There are at this day a sporadic few who advocate government ownership of railroads, and some would even include all the great instrumentalities of commerce and production. But the rational majority hold that the state of society is best which makes the individual a free and independent member of the community. His ambitions and energies are best stimulated by his opportunities to prosper for himself. Civilization and enlightenment are advanced by the efforts of the master

spirits of the race. The only demand which the individual can justly make on the community, with its government as the common agent of all, is that it shall not merely protect him in his rights as a free and independent citizen, but that it shall assure him the opportunities for the fullest exercise of his talents, and shall also, as a measure of common interest, provide the facilities for his very highest mental equipment. In this latter service of the state there is nothing whatever of the communistic idea.

The public library is not a public charity. There may be some who regard it as in the nature of a free soup-house which caters to the appetite for mental pabulum more or less wholesome. Most communities make some provision for those who are mentally or physically unfitted to care for themselves and who have no estate nor natural relations upon whom they can rely for support. So the state builds and maintains hospitals and almshouses. This it does simply as a duty of humanity. The instincts of the race and the teachings of an enlightened civilization assure us that a universal brotherhood makes all human creatures kin. As individuals we owe a certain duty to all other individuals, and as organized society we must see to it that the welfare of all is conserved. But there is no duty of kindness or good-will which requires the furnishing of reading matter for the use of the whole community.

The public library is not provided for the mere intellectual enjoyment of the citizens. The municipal corporation uses public funds to buy and beautify parks and boulevards. The purpose of these is to promote the public health and comfort, and incidentally to cultivate the aesthetic sense. The state has a direct interest in the health of its citizens. It must rely on their physical strength for defense in time of peril or invasion. Therefore it must have a care that their physical welfare is promoted. Wholesome food, gentle exercise, a cheerful and contented mind, have much to do with soundness of body, and so food-inspection and open-air recreation are justified at the common expense.

Art-museums and public concerts are sometimes maintained out of the general treasury. The only basis on which this expense can be justified is that their purpose is educational. The welfare of the state depends not alone on the ability of its citizens to merely read and write and solve problems in simple

arithmetic. Our nature is many-sided and its full and perfect development must be sought in many directions. The aesthetic is not less real than the practical. The finer qualities of the mind have weighty influence upon national progress and destiny. The state has a right to do for its citizens the things which will best serve its ultimate interests.

Universities and higher institutions of learning maintained at public cost now train those who have the means and opportunities to take advantage of their curricula for the most advanced degrees, and through their post-graduate courses offer facilities for spending the good part of a lifetime in the immediate pursuit of knowledge. But in the nature of things the number of those who can give time to these higher courses is limited. The argument has sometimes been employed against high schools and universities that they are maintained at great cost for the use of a comparatively trifling portion of the community. Statistics are quoted to show that of the whole number of children in the primary grades less than 25 per cent. go through the grammar grades, and that of the small number who enter the high school grades hardly one in ten finishes them, while of these but an infinitesimal number go on to and through the university.

It is not due to lack of capacity wholly, or lack of interest, that so many students fall by the wayside, but mainly to the fact that their services are necessary in the productive channels of business. Yet, in spite of the comparatively few who are able to take advantage of them, the state considers it a duty to foster, and the community cheerfully bears the burden of maintaining, the higher institutions of learning, because the benefits which they confer are easily recognized. To compensate in some degree those who are not able to pursue in organized institutions studies untimely stopped by the necessities of active life, the community provides the free library. This is the people's university, close to the door of every citizen, in which all who have the inclination and energy to do so may pursue through their whole lives the studies which most interest them.

The function of the public library is purely and wholly educational. In this case the term is to be construed in its most comprehensive sense. It does not merely include development of the intellect; it involves all the varied human relations. We owe duties to our Maker, to ourselves, to those who are dependent



upon us, to our neighbors, to society, and to the state. In all these delicate and intricate relations we must be taught, and as the world advances, our civilization becomes more complex and our relations more involved, the character and quality of our education becomes the more important. The school and the college have merely laid the foundation. If they have done their full duty they have done little more than set the student on the high road. The sequel rests with himself. The public library puts into his hands books, which contain the combined wisdom and experience of all who have gone before, and wherein are preserved the best thoughts of the best men and women of all time. They who pass judgment upon what shall and what shall not be admitted to the shelves of a public library must bear in mind that, strictly construing the function of the library to be educational, there is yet very wide latitude in respect to the things which people may safely and wisely learn.

In this aspect of the case, those who are charged with the management and control of libraries have imposed upon them a very grave responsibility. They are not merely the custodians of the books which the public purse has bought; they are commissioned to guide in the path of highest progress. In this light, the function of the librarian assumes the halo of a holy office. He who discharges it earnestly and faithfully may do much to help forward the enlightenment of his generation.

The sum of the whole statement, briefly, is this: There is no limit to the concern of the free state in the education of its citizens. It is as much bound to provide libraries in which the adult may continue his studies as it is to maintain schools in which as a child he may begin them. The day is not distant when this duty will be universally recognized in this country. In most of the states compulsory education laws prevail. In at least one, every town is required by law to establish and maintain a free public library. In this respect, New Hampshire is only leading the way in which others will shortly follow.

Then organized society can truthfully say to the individual, in the language of Professor Hoffman in his "Sphere of the State": "We have done what we could to develop and strengthen all your powers. We have taught you to the best of our ability to know yourself and to understand your relations to your fellows. Now, so long as you conduct yourself as a child of the day and not of the night, all the rights and privileges of

the brotherhood are yours. But if you choose to walk in the darkness rather than in the light, if you trample under foot our laws, if you raise your hand against every man, let the curse of your wrong doing fall upon your own head, not on ours."

## ALTERNATIVES TO TAX-SUPPORT

In the case of a public library, that is, of one intended to be used by all the members of the community, as distinguished from a subscription library, alternatives to public support have usually been in the nature of expedients to tide matters over until the library could be turned over to the municipality. The next two papers are early discussions of some of these alternatives.



## IF NOT A TAX-SUPPORTED LIBRARY, WHAT?

The following paper contributed anonymously to *The Iowa Library Quarterly* (Des Moines, April, 1903) tells how local library associations have been formed in that state, in small towns where public support, for the moment, has been deemed impossible or inadvisable.

The fact that a majority of the states of the Union have by legal enactment provided for free public libraries supported by tax indicates the general acceptance of the belief that such an institution is for the public good and its support as an educational institution is as desirable as the support of the public schools.

More and more has it come to be recognized that if the ideals and aspirations of youth are to be aroused and directed early in life by the reading of inspiring books, the state may well foster this institution which provides such literature.

The Code of Iowa provides that towns and cities shall have power to provide for the foundation and maintenance of a free public library by voting upon the question, "Shall a free public library be established" at a general or special election, and further providing that a tax not exceeding two mills on the dollar of the taxable valuation of such city or town may be levied for its support. This places the library on a firm footing as a public educational institution, even though its income from the tax may be small.

There are, however, some towns in the state that find it impossible or unwise at present to secure this support of the library by a tax and hence they ask, "If not a free public library supported by tax, what shall we attempt?" This inquiry is practical. The desire is earnest in many places to support a library by some other means than a tax until such time as sentiment will be strong enough to vote favorably upon it, hence the best method of conducting it needs to be considered.

The beginning of such a work must be made by a few,

earnest people who thoroughly believe in the need of a public collection of books, not alone for the value it will be to them personally, but what it may do for the many who are unable to own books for themselves. Club women are often the most active factors in inaugurating such a movement and sometimes the Woman's Club alone espouses the cause of the library and provides for the purchase of books and the running expenses of the library. It would seem, however, after observation of various efforts, more or less successful, along this line, that it is much better to secure the cooperation of all clubs and other organizations in the town, thus disarming any outside criticism or antagonism from those outside the one club.

A library association, which includes all persons in the town who are desirous of having a public library, seems to be the better form for the organization to take, though a city federation of clubs has proven a successful agency in many towns. The difficulty of providing funds for conducting such a library on an absolutely free basis is evident, but to make membership in the association, with the payment of an annual membership fee, the condition of borrowing is to bar from the use of the books the people who need them most.

In organizing a library association it will be necessary to decide what the policy is to be in this respect. Shall the library be solely for those who join the association and pay this fee, or shall this be an altruistic movement for the betterment of the town, making the use of the books free to all? If the latter plan is decided upon it will be necessary to provide by subscription of citizens or by entertainments and otherwise, a larger fund for the support of the library, and such an undertaking should be well considered for it often becomes burdensome.

If an association is formed with an annual membership fee which entitles the member to the use of the books, those who feel unable to pay this annual fee may be loaned books upon the payment of a small fee for the loan of a single book.

The reading room feature is of great importance and whatever plan may be adopted regarding the loan of the books for home use there is no reason why the use of the reading room, the periodicals and the books in the room should not be absolutely free to all who will come there to use them. To make the reading room the brightest and most attractive spot in town for the boys who are inclined to be on the street of evenings is a



possibility for any library association, if a few earnest women will give time and effort toward this end.

The actual expenses incurred in such a venture are room rent, furniture, heat, light, services of a librarian and the purchase of books and periodicals, but a systematic effort to interest the people of the town often results in the donation of the use of a room and the other necessities. It is not desirable to solicit donation of books. The random inclination of people to pass on to the public library books they do not care for on their own library shelves is damaging to the library receiving them. In another column the report of the Audubon Club mentions this point. The books should be selected with the greatest care.

The most important feature of such an enterprise is to have some one in charge of the room who shall be suited to the work,—a woman of culture and character, of pleasing manners and one who loves children and delights in aiding readers. Such a librarian gives an "atmosphere" to the whole undertaking.

In many towns club women and others who are interested have volunteered to serve as librarians, without compensation, and if a head librarian is selected to whom these volunteer workers shall report and who is responsible for the work, this arrangement seems a good one until such time as funds will permit of the employment of a paid librarian.

At Audubon, Exira, Glenwood, Guthrie Center, Laurens, Leon, Tama and other places in the state, the women are most courageously carrying on this work, with the hope that the town will eventually take the responsibility off their shoulders by voting a tax to support the library.

If any attempt has been made to vote a municipal tax and it has failed, or if there seems to be little sentiment in favor of the measure, there is no need to feel disheartened. A beginning may be made by securing a travelling library of 50 volumes from the Library Commission at Des Moines, without other cost than transportation, and these books, may be exchanged for a similar collection every 3 months, thus making 200 volumes accessible during the year.

This collection with the few books the local association is able to buy and a few good magazines should make it possible to open the room for reading and the issue of books two afternoons and evenings each week—preferably Wednesday and Saturday.

The small beginning will gather to itself strength if the workers are persistent; the collection of books will increase, sentiment will grow more favorable and eventually the movement will be popular.

In making such a beginning the Iowa Library Commission should be called upon for the use of the traveling library, form of constitution and by-laws, book lists and other printed matter, and the secretary will be glad to render any assistance possible in forwarding such an enterprise in any town in the state.

## CO-OPERATION BETWEEN LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY

A paper that originally appeared in *The Springfield Republican*, Dec. 1, 1899, and was reprinted in Home Education Bulletin No. 31 of the University of the State of New York. The author, Miss M. Anna Tarbell of Brimfield, Mass.

The use of the word cooperation in connection with the public library implies that the library is not simply a collection of books, that it is not a passive institution, a repository of treasure, but an active institution reaching out to bestow benefits. The library spirit means not only cooperating with all uplifting forces in the community, but creating and stimulating such forces. The library spirit seeks to carry brightness into gray and toilworn lives, to give broad vision in place of the narrow and distorted view, to awaken generous sympathies and noble thoughts in place of sordid desires and petty interests. Imbued with this spirit, the librarian will be a lover of humankind, sympathetic, earnest, self-sacrificing, a true missionary, enthusiastic withal and eager to seize upon ways and means by which the library may more and more be made to enrich human life. But however abundant in resources the library, and however zealous and efficient the librarian, there is a limit to the work that can be accomplished on the library side for the promotion of intellectual life and general culture. There needs to be a larger and more intelligent demand on the community side for the supply which the library offers. To stimulate this demand there is needed the cooperation of those people and those institutions in the community that possess special opportunities for increasing the use and influence of the library, or in any way making human life wiser, better and happier. This cooperation may be both direct and indirect, since all culture influences are by nature cooperative with that of the library. I shall dwell specially on the need of stimulating cooperation on the side of

the community, for the reason that the library has already taken the initiative, and because library privileges are so abundant in Massachusetts, so freely offered and eagerly extended, without a proportionate response to these privileges on the part of the public.

While dwelling most upon the importance of its educational influences, I would not underrate the province of the library in providing entertainment and recreation, which have their culture value. But the following are impressive words from the editor of the New England magazine in its current number: "Education in a democracy is so fundamental that education may almost be looked upon as another way of spelling democracy." "We are to consider more carefully the educational function of everything which affects the mind of the people: the church, the newspaper, the library, the platform."

Considering cooperation with the library on the part of individuals, we naturally think first of those who are connected with the library by virtue of their office, namely, the library trustees. The trustees have special opportunities for increasing the use and usefulness of the library on account of their acquaintance with, and influence upon, the library on one hand, and their daily intercourse with the public on the other. There has so far come to my notice such assistance by the trustees as inviting people, specially newcomers, to the library, carrying books to outlying schools, personal assistance in the library and collecting historical material for preservation in the library. It is true that the literal requirements of the office of library trustee are only those of a conservative nature, just as the duties of the librarian were formerly considered to be those of the careful custodian, but as the library spirit gains ground and the conception of the library as an active mission grows, we may look forward to the day when every town will be sure of having six or nine persons, as the case may be, not only engaged in improving the character of the library, but in promoting its increased and more effective use, a standing committee for the culture interests of the town. This cooperation will be promoted by trustees attending the meetings of library clubs, joining the clubs and assisting them, as well as by giving the librarian every encouragement to do so, such as granting leave of absence and possibly paying expenses. The *Library journal* and *Public libraries* should be on the subscription list of every library, and

trustees as well as librarian need to keep informed of progress in the library world.

There are other people in every town who would be willing to assist in the work of the library, or help people to get books or encourage more and better reading if asked to do so by the librarian. To seek out such persons, then, is the duty and opportunity of the librarian in this work of cooperation. Suggestions regarding "Volunteer aids in library work" are admirably given in the report of the state library commission for this year in the bound volume, *Public libraries of Massachusetts*, and should be read by librarians and trustees and shown to all patrons of the library who are available for assistance.

Surely the home should cooperate with the library by the example of the reading habit, and by the direction of the reading of the children; while it would be an excellent thing for parents to pursue lines of reading that would keep them in touch with the children's studies. As it is, I fear librarians will bear out the recent statement of a school supervisor that "The home is not even inclined to supervise the children's reading, and, the selection of books being left largely to themselves, many boys and girls read books not proper for them to read."

The church, the school and the library are institutions which naturally constitute a triple alliance. Cooperation between the library and the schools, which has received so much consideration and is being so rapidly developed, I need not dwell upon. But there is need for increased cooperation between the church and the library. This cooperation should be both direct and indirect. Ministers should feel a responsibility for the intellectual, as well as spiritual, welfare of the people. They should show that intelligence and breadth of mind make a better and more efficient Christian, and that the church will become a greater power if its members read and think. The minister has had special privileges for his own culture, and he has peculiar opportunities for recommending books, guiding library taste, and directly increasing the use of the library. There should be some kind of study club connected with every church, and those young people who have finished their school course should be taught their moral obligation to cultivate their God-given mental powers and grow in intelligence and wisdom.

To advance the special interests of the church along intellectual lines, the library should be provided with books that will

improve Sunday school work, aid in the study of the Bible, and the growth of intelligence on religious subjects. It should be provided with up to date histories of Bible times in the light of archeological discoveries, with works of modern reverent scholarship concerning the Bible, and books which record the development of religious thought. Much excellent study is being done by members of the women's missionary societies. It is very desirable that these women cooperate with the librarian in the selection of standard works revealing conditions in the countries studied.

Among organizations, women's clubs have probably done the most to assist library interests. This is especially true in some of the western states, notably in Wisconsin. Literary and other study clubs which prevail in New England are certainly in their nature cooperative with the library, while they might be of more direct assistance to it. The library, of course, should give these societies all possible encouragement and help. The clubs will react favorably on the library in creating a demand for books which will improve the character of the accessions to the library. Where a study club does not exist, the librarian should help to form one. It is possible that there is a tendency to exclusiveness in women's literary clubs. If the number limit keeps out those desirous of joining, or those who need encouragement in literary interest, a branch club for their benefit should be formed. Besides working for their own improvement, the members of study clubs should have a missionary spirit and should feel a responsibility for the intellectual welfare of the town. A woman's literary club is capable of being a strong ally of the public library.

The newly developing local history societies and the public library are naturally allied, and promise to be of increasing mutual benefit. The library should buy town histories and books needed by the historical society, while the latter will contribute to the library records, maps and published memorials. Further, the historical society, by sustaining lectures in which the principles of colonial development are illustrated by local annals, should develop a perception and interest which will be manifested in a demand for volumes of history now lying dusty on the library shelves.

The grange is another organization whose objects affiliate it with the library, since the grange movement is an important cul-



ture movement. There is opportunity for more active cooperation between the library and the grange. The grange, and also the farmers' clubs, should be asked to recommend the best works upon agriculture, while the lecturer of the grange and the committee of the farmers' clubs should confer in advance with the librarian as to material needed in carrying out their literary programs. More than one other organization might be mentioned which would help the library and be helped by it through increased cooperation, thereby extending the influence of both. It is the sense of obligation and responsibility that needs to grow.

The public press is an agency which certainly ought to be a firm ally of the public library, cooperating with it directly and indirectly. Newspapers should be ever ready to give space to any matter that will bring the library to the attention of the public, and they should also keep the public informed of progress in library interests. Deeper than this, the press should constantly exemplify and teach culture ideals, the true mission of journalism.

The hope of stimulating greater cooperation between the community and the public library seems to me to lie largely in the library club or, better, library association, movement. First, local library clubs should increase in number, becoming more truly local, thus exerting a stronger influence upon the libraries in the section represented and coming into closer relation with the community. The membership should include people who are neither librarians nor trustees, but whose sense of responsibility will be awakened as their interest is increased. The district represented should not be so large as to prevent meetings being frequently held in the same vicinity. These local clubs should be in close relation with the state club or association, and the state library commission. The local clubs will do the actual close work, while having the support, advice and assistance of the state club and state commission. The local clubs will give information as to conditions and needs, and will be agencies for the application of progressive ideas. The study of conditions, of what may be called the environment of libraries, comes within the province of library-club work. The study of the conditions and needs of the small towns and rural communities is of leading importance. From what other source except from the library movement with a greater development of its possibilities

is help for those towns to come? The initiative in personal effort to give advantages for want of which some of the small towns are suffering has been taken by the women's education association in the loan of their traveling libraries accompanied by personal visits and the study of conditions and needs.

But there is another want besides that of books in the small villages and towns. There is needed not only the printed page, but the speaking voice, the influence of personality through lectures. A story from experience will illustrate this need. A few years ago there was held in our town an exhibition of antiquities which awakened intense interest on the part of old and young. This interest made a good opportunity for the study of colonial history, which a few of us carried on. Certain books not in our library were needed, although the library is a good one and well equipped in American history. Our want came to the knowledge of Miss Chandler, chairman of the library committee of the woman's education association, and out of this grew, another year, a special library lent to us upon American history which formed a valuable supplement to the works contained in our library in that department. At both times, when we had the exhibition and when we received the traveling library (which we still possess, having bought the books) I realized the opportunity and need of lectures. What a strong combination the group would have made—the exhibition, the working library, a lecture course. This would have been in reality an adaptation of the idea of university extension, which I believe could be developed by the library club movement. Each town would have its standing library committee composed of members of the local library club, and several towns in the district represented by the club would form a convenient circuit. But if this scheme, which I believe to be feasible, can not be immediately developed or applied, there should be no delay on the part of those interested in library work in Massachusetts in considering some plan of promoting popular education, the leading object today of library work, through lectures of some kind, if not sustained courses having continuity of subject.

Two difficulties meet this need of lectures in the smaller and poorer towns and in many villages, that of the expense of securing the best talent (and nothing short of excellent ability will serve), and that of knowing where to find available speakers. The last difficulty can be met by organizing a committee who

will search out those who can be secured to speak under the auspices of the libraries of the small towns. A plan for bringing the expense within the means of the people of those towns might also be developed. One source of help might be found in the increase of the powers of the state library commission. In Wisconsin the efficiency and powers of the state commission have been extended by the passage of a bill through the legislature increasing the appropriation awarded the commission and adding to its duties. The commission is empowered to hold library institutes in various parts of the state, and to encourage the growth of study clubs connected with the traveling libraries. To carry out the duties of the commission, among which is mentioned "to aid in building up a better system of popular education," the additional sum of \$3500 is awarded to the commission. Why should not Massachusetts aid in building up a better system of popular education by helping to provide speakers for the smaller villages and towns where needed, thus supplementing and aiding the work of the public libraries? It is possible that a beginning could be made through the establishment of library institutes. If it should be considered wise to establish library institutes in this state, as important a feature of them as instruction in library matters would be lectures for the public on literary and educational subjects of a popular nature. The first step to be taken is for a committee representing the three existing library clubs and the Massachusetts library commission to consider what plans are most feasible, not only for the improvement of library work, but also for increasing the intelligent and effective use of the library by creating new ideals of popular education in the community, and thus bring about cooperation in its deepest sense.



## BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

A board of trustees, or of directors or commissioners, is the representative of the community in its control of the library and in the formal service rendered by the community to the library. The relationship was familiar in other public institutions at the time that public libraries began to be established, and its duties, responsibilities and limitations in this instance were regarded as being the same as in others. They were therefore not widely discussed, and the work of library trusteeship is still too little systematized.

The Trustees' Section of the A. L. A., founded in order that Library trustees might gather yearly to discuss their peculiar problems, has always been scantily attended. The Indiana Trustees Association is the only prosperous body of the kind in the United States, but its success might well prove suggestive to library trustees in other states. The three following papers were all read at a single library conference in 1890, which may show that there was then some degree of awakening to the necessity for discussing this phase of library administration.





## LIBRARY WORK FROM THE TRUSTEES' STANDPOINT

A few first principles by the president of the Board of what was at that time the St. Louis Public School Library, since 1893 the St. Louis Public Library. The Rev. Mr. Learned read this paper at the Fabyan's Conference of the American Library Association, in 1890.

John Calvin Learned was born in Dublin, N. H., Aug. 7, 1834. He engaged in teaching, went to Missouri in 1856 and in 1859 entered Harvard Divinity School. After graduation he was pastor of a Unitarian church in Exeter, N. H., and in 1870 took charge of the newly-organized Church of the Unity in St. Louis where he remained until his death, Dec. 8, 1893. He was a member of the Board of Managers of the Public School Library from 1884 to 1892 and its president for half that period.

An old play has it that "trustees are not to be trifled with" and, as they are not only allowed but invited to come among the librarians to assert their rights and their authority, why should they not do it vigorously? Did they not originate the librarian? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'"

Yet to assume such creative power must load us down with responsibilities—greater, I fear, than some of us have joyfully accepted. In fact, do not trustees incline, as a rule, to throw too much of the burden of library administration upon the librarian? If the incumbent of this office is fairly willing and capable, is he not suffered to do pretty much as he pleases, except it may be with regard to such large measures as the construction of buildings and the management of investments?

Proportioned to the authority of trustees, however, is their responsibility. To whom much is given, of them much is required. And the position of the better sort of trustee valuable to the best work of the librarian, is not that sinecure seat sometimes depicted. He must constantly stand as the able and ready advisor of the librarian, and for the honor and defence of the library. He will be made the court of ultimate appeal in many matters, both practical and curious. He will receive letters from all sorts of people, some with gifts in their hands, and some with complaints on their lips; some seeking favors, possible and impossible. Col. Higginson's humorous way, recently, of introducing Phillips Brooks as the man whom nobody in the Cambridge library could find out the height of, until at last the inquiry was brought to him as trustee to answer, may illustrate the point.

Lately an article in one of the English reviews treats of the "Perils of Trustees." And while no statute makes us responsible,—as innocent parties were held to be under British law, in the failure of the Glasgow Bank,—yet the library trustee carries risks, both moral and financial, and the place should be offered to none who will not give it a *bonafide* service. There is no room for a mere figure-head or ornamental name on a working library board. Every member of a directory, rightly organized, should take his share in the administration, and have some knowledge of what goes on in the library world.

It is true there have been instances where some ambitious and irrepressible spirit has exceeded his official duties and privileges; has been disposed to dictate the whole policy of the library, reducing the librarian's office to that of a mere secretary. I knew a director in a large library who resigned because he could not buy the books and write all the reports. He hungered for more to do. But I have known more than one to keep himself as far away from the board as possible, after one or two sessions of three or four hours each, in the necessary deliberations of the book committee.

Edward Everett Hale says that the great essential for the directors or trustees of any institution is, that they "keep their end in sight," as Dr. Watt's hymn reads. If it is an institution to help old women, or save poor children, or find situations for the idle, does it really do it? Or is it so taken up with the

mechanism of the concern, so absorbed and happy over methods and details, that it loses sight of the object? This is especially to be considered in the management of a public library. What is the library for? Is it accomplishing its work? Is it doing its utmost to promote the virtue, refinement, and intelligence of the community?

A library may be likened to a bank where literary reserves are kept. It is organized to promote the circulation of a sound literary currency. The directors must see to it that, though there may be counterfeit and worthless money in the vaults, the cashier or librarian must pay over the counter for general circulation such only as will maintain the institution's standard of credit and confidence in the community. The gold basis must be maintained, and no "wild-cat" bills pass out through the window.

It grows increasingly evident that very few libraries in the world can indulge in the luxury or licence of buying all books written. The ambition to supply any man with any work he calls for must therefore be held in check. Thus it becomes increasingly important that much care and deliberation be exercised in the choice of books to be bought, whether to complete deficient departments or for the daily circulation. The purchase of poor books makes a market for poor authorship. Hereafter, less than ever should libraries be the dumping place for indiscreet publishers, for questionable or incompetent authors. The public library exists for civilization, that is, for moral ends. It is the record and history of civilization, as well as the ally of progress. It is the "friend and helper of all those who seek to live in the spirit." For this reason, therefore, the character of the books in a library is of more importance than mere numbers; and the value of a library to the community may be imperfectly shown by the statistics of circulation. No aim can be higher, however, than having a good library, to make its resources known, and to multiply readers in the remotest and obscurest parts of our towns and cities.



## TRUSTEES OF FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

In introducing this topic, Mr. C. C. Soule, who spoke as a trustee of the Brookline Public Library, said that he had found little or nothing about it in existing library literature, and that his paper had been shown to a considerable number of both trustees and librarians and modified in accordance with their views. His analysis of the subject is somewhat closer than President Learned's.

Charles Carroll Soule was born in Boston June 25, 1842 and graduated at Harvard in 1862. After serving in the Civil War, which he left as a captain of Massachusetts volunteers he became a publisher and after 1889 was president of the Boston Book Co. He was an active member of the American Library Association. He died at his home in Brookline, Jan. 7, 1913

This paper considers the constitution of elective boards of trustees of free public libraries, intrusted with the appointment of librarians and full control of their libraries.

The subject can be naturally treated under the following heads: Size of the board; term of office; qualifications for the position; duties; individual and collective; organization; and relations with the librarian.

### I. SIZE OF THE BOARD

The weight of opinion seems to be in favor of small boards; and in small towns, where the duties are light, three trustees will usually work more harmoniously and effectively than a larger number. But in large towns and cities a more numerous board has two advantages—there is more chance of securing among its members one or two men who are exceptionally active, intelli-

gent, judicious, and interested in library science; and the board may be more thoroughly representative of different sections of the town and different elements in the population.

## 2. TERM OF OFFICE

The usual and undoubtedly the best composition of a board of library trustees is to divide it into groups, one group going out of office each year. This provision secures stability by preventing sudden changes of the whole board by intrigue or popular caprice, and is intended to allow opportunity for gradual change whenever it is needed.

But does this provision alone insure sufficient change to prevent stagnation? The position of trustee of a library is so pleasant and honorable, that the incumbent may wish to retain it indefinitely. The men selected as trustees may be personally so worthy and popular that their townsmen are reluctant to retire them compulsorily, even when the feeling is prevalent that others might serve more acceptably. To effect a change under such circumstances requires an effort approaching revolution, with danger of that discord and bad feeling which are so unfortunate in library management.

Would it not be wise, in view of this possible danger, to follow the example of the graduates of Harvard College in electing overseers, and provide by law that no trustee shall hold office for more than (say) three successive terms of three years, or nine years in all? While a library might thus lose occasionally an active and efficient trustee (who could still be reëlected after being only a year out of office), would it not gain much more than it could lose, in keeping that close contact with popular needs and with new ideas, which is so healthy and stimulating in the management of all public institutions?

## 3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE POSITION

The ideal qualifications for a trustee of a public library (a fair education and love of books being taken for granted) might be summarized somewhat thus:—

Sound character; good judgement and common-sense; public spirit; capacity for work; literary taste; representative fitness.



Men of character and position in the community are usually selected as trustees; but it may be assumed somewhat too confidently that, because a man has been prominent in political or business or social circles, he will make a good trustee. It is a mistake to put in such a position any man who has outlived his public spirit and energy.

Library taste is placed low on this list of qualifications, because in any administrative position, even in connection with a library, capacity and willingness to work, united with common-sense and a fair education, are much more useful than a taste for literature without the practical qualities. And of the different grades of literary taste, general culture and a wide range of reading are generally more serviceable to a public library than the knowledge of the scholar or the specialist.

In selecting men of prominence for trustees, there is danger of excluding too rigidly the younger men who might contribute to the strength and efficiency of the board. There is so much activity and progress in the library work of this generation, that the adage "Old men for counsel, young men for action" is not wholly inapplicable to the choice of trustees, whose work requires counsel and action in nearly equal degrees.

With a large board it would seem wise to select members with some reference to representation of different sections of the town, and different occupations, interests, or nationalities among the inhabitants. This tends to prevent dissatisfaction, and to adapt the purchase of books and the general policy of the library to the needs of the whole community, rather than to the wishes of special classes.

Neither politics nor religious opinion should of course enter into the choice of library trustees, except so far as it is unwise to constitute a board exclusively from one party or one denomination.

#### 4. DUTIES, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

As an individual, the trustee of a public library ought to realize that he holds a high and sacred trust from the people; that he has been elected to preserve and extend the privileges and benefits afforded by the library in its modern development as "The People's University"; that library science is not to be comprehended by intuition, but can be learned only by intelligent observation and study; and that he has no right to accept or hold

the position unless he can take a lively interest in the library, be constant in attendance at meetings and diligent in committee work, keep himself informed of the current library ideas by reading every number of the *Library journal*, and, if possible, by visiting other libraries than his own, and watch keenly the tastes and requirements of the constituency he represents.

The collective duties of the board includes the care of investments and funds, the careful and economical supervision of expenditures, the determination of the policy of the library toward the public and in its interior administration, the general direction of the choice and purchase of books, the selection of the librarian and his assistants, constant and critical observation of their work, occasional reckoning up of work done and progress made, comparison of results with those reached in other libraries, as a confirmation of merits and a corrective for errors, and such active work of detail as will assist the librarian in performing his duties.

## 5. ORGANIZATION

A large board ordinarily transacts business through a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer, and one or more committees.

The chairman has few active duties, but the position requires judgment in appointing committees, and tact in conducting meetings. The place is perhaps the highest public honor in small towns, and is usually and properly given to some trustee eminent for character and public services.

In Mr. Perkins's article, "How to make Town Libraries Successful," in the "Government Report of 1876 on Public Libraries," it is suggested that the librarian should act as secretary to the board of trustees; but, aside from the fact he usually has more than enough work to do in his own department, is it not at least doubtful whether an official, whose conduct may at any time be a proper subject for confidential discussion before the board, should serve as their secretary, and so be obliged to be present throughout all meetings? The duties of a secretary may properly provide occupation for some member of the board.

The treasurer, if he holds funds in his hands, should always be put under bond. No matter how trustworthy he may be, it is a sound principal that no official should handle public money without giving bond. His successor may not be so careful or so honest, and, unless the precedent is established while the danger

of loss seems small, it will be difficult and invidious to insist upon a bond when occasion may require it. If no trustee is willing to accept the position of treasurer with bond, it is usually possible to leave the library funds in the hands of the already bonded town treasurer, and draw on them as needed to pay bills.

As to committees, it is better to have as many as can actively be employed, in order to enlist the cooperation or advice of every trustee. In large boards, even with small libraries, four standing committees can find occupation; namely, executive, book, finance, and progress.

The executive committee can take charge of the daily work of the library, of purchases, and of the care of the building. They should be efficient men, with prompt business habits, with an active interest in the library, with leisure to attend to their duties during library hours, and with sufficient discretion to sift and formulate business to be presented at the meetings of the trustees. While discharging their executive duties promptly and thoroughly, they ought to be careful not to assume too much of the power and responsibility which properly belong to the full board, whose will they are appointed to execute.

[In very large libraries, these duties of an executive committee are sometimes subdivided among additional committees on building and grounds, on purchase of supplies, on reading-room and so on, as different departments increase in importance.]

Inasmuch as the range of reading, the literary taste, and the critical faculty, which qualify a man to select books for popular use, are not necessarily united with executive ability, it will often be best to intrust the choice of books to a book committee, selected for that purpose alone. This is a sufficiently important duty to occupy all the spare time of a committee, even where the initiative is taken by the librarian, and appeal on doubtful points is made to the full board.

The duties of a finance committee are often confined to a perfunctory and occasional examination of accounts, but they may be made very important. To make and watch investments, to provide that money on deposit shall always draw the best interest, to see that purchases of books and supplies are made on the most favorable terms, to keep close watch on all the controllable expenditures, to examine and verify bills, and to audit carefully the treasurer's accounts, will give full employment to a good committee of business men.

In addition to these obviously useful committees, there is another,—a “Committee on Library Progress”—which often serves to increase the activity and efficiency of the library. Constituted from among the younger or more active men, and from those trustees who can find opportunity for visiting other libraries, such a committee can do good work in watching the experiments made elsewhere; in placing before the board information in regard to improved methods of library work; in comparing the library with other libraries similarly situated; and in encouraging their own librarian, if he be progressive, or in stimulating him, if too conservative. In short such a committee, if both active and wise, could keep even the smallest town library in the full tide of modern progress.

It will be best not to leave too much discretion or power permanently to any committee, but to require all committees to report their acts and plans frequently for the approval or criticism of the full board.

#### 6. RELATIONS WITH THE LIBRARIAN

The relations of the trustees with the librarian will vary greatly according to circumstances. Some general principals may be suggested, subject always to “the exceptions which prove the rule.”

First of all, it should be borne in mind that the trustees are the responsible managers of the library, and that so far as they chose to act, the librarian is only their agent, bound in honor to carry out their wishes promptly, thoroughly, and cheerfully.

If they are fortunate enough, however, to have a first-class librarian, with superior ability, training, knowledge, energy, wisdom, and tact, the trustees ought to leave the management of the library practically to him, working only to lighten his labors and strengthen his hands.

But if—as sometimes may happen—the librarian has human limitations, and while strong in some directions is weak in others, it is the part of the trustees to try to supplement, without impeding, his abilities. If, after ascertaining his limitations, they decide that he is the best librarian that they can get, under the circumstances of the case they should note in what lines he needs help, and select for committees the trustees best

fitted to do the part of library work which he cannot satisfactorily perform.

If, however, the librarian has executive ability, it will be wise for the trustees to let him control the selection, management, and dismissal of all his assistants; if he has good judgment and what may be called "the librarian's faculty," it will be wise to let him arrange the methods and details of library work; if he has literary taste, it will be especially wise to allow him at least the initiative in the choice and purchase of books, for he has (or ought to have) constant contact with the public and an intelligent knowledge of their wants.

Although it may not be considered best for the librarian to act as their secretary, the trustees should take him into their confidence, consult him freely, and invite his presence during some part of each board meeting and of all committee meetings where his advice might be of service. The librarian can properly reciprocate by allowing the board and the committees frequent opportunities for private conference and "executive session," unembarrassed by his presence.

In brief, while the trustees cannot forget that they control both library and librarian, they should remember that the librarian is chosen to be their expert advisor and their executive officer, and, so long as he fills these positions satisfactorily, they ought not to hamper or interfere with, so much as to assist and sustain him by their actions.

The relations of an active librarian with an active board of trustees demand discretion and consideration on both sides. But if the librarian is sensible, and not too sensitive, and the trustees are reasonably harmonious and judicious, the cooperation herein outlined may be carried out with success.





## THE DUTIES OF TRUSTEES AND THEIR RELATIONS TO LIBRARIANS

Although Mr. S. S. Green says that he has prepared this paper "from the standpoint of a librarian," he is competent to speak from that of a trustee also, for he served as both, having been a trustee of the Worcester Public Library for some time when he was chosen its librarian. A sketch of Samuel Swett Green will be found in Vol I. of this series.

In the symposium in which we are now engaged, I understand that I am to consider the subject which we are talking about from the standpoint of a librarian.

The position can be stated in a few words.

A librarian should be regarded as holding relations to his trustees similar to those held by the agent of a factory or the cashier of a bank to the governing board of the factory or bank.

Some cashiers and some agents have more power than others. The power conferred depends upon the knowledge, training, experience, industry, enterprise, good judgment, and ability of persons holding such positions.

If the board of trustees of a library is more competent to manage its affairs than the librarian, and if it is ready to give the time that is necessary to the discharge of the duties of management, it has a perfect right to do so, and the librarian need then only be a clerk.

So, too, if on any board of directors there is one man of leisure who has especial qualifications for conducting the affairs of a library, the board may delegate to him the performance of the more intellectual portions of the work of the librarian.

Even, however, in such cases as those the individuality of the librarian should be considered, because, although his position may be very humble, yet he can do better work if allowed to

work in his own way, rather than in accordance with the provisions of rules laid down by others which he is required to strictly observe.

When a librarian is accomplished, it will be found wise for a board of trustees or directors to ascertain his views on most subjects before acting, and it will generally appear manifest that it is well to give very careful consideration to those views.

A board which encourages its librarian to initiate measures, will administer its trust more satisfactorily than it can if it reduces him to the position of a mere executive officer, who is only to carry out the plans which it has formed.

I should say that the wisest course for a board of trustees to pursue is to let a good librarian do pretty much as he thinks best, only keeping a watchful eye on him for the purpose of seeing that things are not going wrong under his conduct of affairs. It is better, generally speaking, for a board to change its librarian than to undertake to manage matters, unless its members are willing to give much time and thought on the subject.

Mr. Greenough, at that time the President of the Board of Trustees of the Boston Public Library, said to me, just after Mr. Windsor gave up his position of Superintendent of that library, that he wished in his successor the qualities of a librarian (using that designation in a restricted sense) and not those of a superintendent, and that the title of the new officer would be librarian and not superintendent.

Mr. Greenough had had a long connection with the Boston Public Library as a trustee and as President of the Board of Trustees, and felt that he knew, better than any person whose services the library was likely to secure, how to conduct its affairs.

Judge Chamberlain, Mr. Windsor's successor, accepted the situation and stated in an early report, in substance, that the duty of a librarian is merely to carry out the wishes of the board of trustees.

But Mr. Greenough became disabled after a while, and Judge Chamberlain gained experience; and I venture to say, during the latter portion of the short time which he was connected with the Boston Public Library, he found that in the long run a librarian must take upon himself the lion's share in the entire management of a library. Now that Judge Chamberlain has resigned his place, the Trustees of the Boston Public Library are

understood to be looking around for an accomplished superintendent.

The ideal executive head of a large public library—let me say it emphatically—should have the qualifications of both librarian and superintendent. Perhaps, in the case of some of the largest libraries, it is well to have both a superintendent and a librarian; but when such a distribution of duties becomes desirable, it is certain that the superintendent should have something of the spirit of a librarian, and as much of his technical knowledge as possible, and that the librarian should be often consulted in regard to questions of management, and have, himself, no mean qualifications as an executive officer.

A good librarian should be allowed to make experiments (observing, of course, reasonable limits), without consulting the board of trustees, with the purpose of satisfying himself as to the desirability and feasibility of adopting new methods, and of obtaining evidence that will enable the board to form intelligent opinions in regard to the value of changes recommended by him.

Experiments may often be undertaken, with good prospect of success, by persons familiar with kinds of work which a board of trustees, acquainted with such kinds of work, would not care to try, but which, nevertheless, it is very important should be tried.

A librarian should have the appointment of his assistants in his own hands, and should himself consult heads of departments in the choice of persons to serve under them.

He should be allowed to buy such books as are needed between meetings of library committees and boards of trustees, just as a trusted cashier is permitted to loan money to a bank's customer between meetings of its board of directors. Both the librarian and the cashier should, of course, give an account of such proceedings to the committee or board over him at the meeting next after the transactions.

Generally speaking, a competent librarian should be allowed large freedom, and held responsible for wisdom in management.

On the other hand, the board of trustees should insist upon the observance by the librarian of such forms as have been adopted as safe-guards.

While it should allow much liberty to its executive officer, it should also see to it that he keeps the machinery, by which work

is done, in order; so that, if in the exercise of a careful oversight, it shall become advisable at any time for it to resume the power conferred on the librarian, it may be able to do it promptly.

Trustees and directors may render services of the greatest value to libraries and librarians.

Not long ago I had upon my board of directors an influential member, who used to say regularly at the first meeting, after new men came on it, "Gentlemen, our only duty is to support the librarian."

That is saying too much, certainly. It is, however, the duty of a board of trustees to second heartily a librarian in his efforts to make his administration energetic, useful, and progressive, and to do all that it can to secure patient and generous consideration by town and city governments, and by citizens, of all wise measures which he may adopt.

Trustees are very influential in working individually to obtain for a library the support in money which is needed.

They can be of great service in showing their appreciation of good work done by the librarian, by word and act.

It is almost too much to expect of a board of trustees that it should look out to see to it that a librarian receive a proper salary, and that his compensation be increased as his services grow in value, without being reminded that the remuneration is inadequate by a communication from that officer. Still it is very desirable that, when a communication is made, it should be sympathetically considered, and that members of the board should point out to one another the excellence of the services rendered by the librarian instead of expecting him to enlarge upon their value himself.

It should be understood, also, that it is a librarian's duty to state fully the worth of the services of his assistants, and seek adequate compensation for them.

A board of trustees can do much, and should always do as much as possible, to keep the interests of a library and of a librarian from being sacrificed to supposed exigencies of politics.

In some portions of the country the appointment and removal of librarians for political reasons has become a scandal.

A board of trustees owes it to its librarian to protect him from the vagaries of impracticable men who may by some chance become members of the board.

For example, it should quietly vote down unwise propositions, as they are made by fussy or narrow men; by those persons who, while they are self-confident, are also ignorant; by men who are so constituted as always to oppose or hold back, or go ahead recklessly; and by such persons as wish to have a hand in doing everything which it is the duty of the librarian to do, and yet are unwilling to give any time or thought to the conduct of affairs.

There is a tendency in many boards of trustees, when a single member is urgent in opposition to some measure proposed by a librarian, and the other members have no positive opinions regarding the matter, to yield to the objector.

Such oppositions may afford a proper excuse for the delay, but should not be allowed to become permanently efficacious in preventing the execution of a project, without the librarian has been given ample opportunities, for explaining the grounds of his recommendation. The librarian should always be treated as a cooperator, and not as an unintelligent servant. It would always be unwise in him to press the adoption of measures until their wisdom is generally recognized by the trustees. Still his reasons for advising action should be ascertained and duly considered.

A board of trustees will always do well to have the librarian present at its regular meetings. His knowledge and experience will be found of value.

His plans will be the better understood. He, too, by being present will not only comprehend better than in any other way the wishes of the board of trustees (and its members), but, that which is of great importance will catch the spirit which animates it, and become aware of the general principles which it desires should underlie the administration of the institution.

Trustees should bear in mind that unnecessary delays are to be avoided, and that, in order to keep the members of a community in a contented frame of mind, their wants must not only be supplied, but supplied promptly.

Trustees should remember that it is important to give librarians and some of their assistants time in which to aid users of libraries, instead of keeping every attendant constantly employed about routine work.

Trustees should guard themselves against the notion that library work is easy, and that it is only the occupations which

they are usually engaged in, in which employment is wearing and hard.

It must not be supposed, from anything which I have said, that the position of a director or trustee of a library is, in the opinion of librarians, a sinecure.

Our idea is far from this, as will be seen if the remarks already made are carefully considered.

It should be said in conclusion, that one of the most important duties of trustees is to look around among libraries in different towns and cities, to read library reports and accounts of meetings of librarians, with the purpose of finding out whether they are getting as much and as good service from librarians in the communities whose interests they have to look after, as citizens are obtaining in places where libraries and their management have attained a high standard of excellence.

With the same end in view, they should see to it that librarians are provided with the current issues of the best library journals and with a collection of the best bibliographical works.

They should also put themselves, and insist upon librarians putting themselves, into vital relations with other libraries, and with the whole body of librarians.

Librarians should never forget that the real authority in a library rests with the board of trustees, or fail to render immediate and cordial submission to its directions.

They should also seek and accept with gratitude all practical suggestions that may be made to them by trustees or other persons.

When any members of the board of trustees are specialists, they should be urged to give the library the benefit of their special knowledge, by proposing for purchase lists of books known to them to be of particular value.

I wish to add to what I have written, the statement that I have always been very fortunate in having over me a body of directors of unusually good judgment, and of the kindest disposition toward me.

In fact, the remarks which I have made regarding the duties of trustees have been suggested to me by observation of the happy results which have followed the administration of the affairs of my own library, by a board of directors who have governed themselves by rules almost identical with those which I have recommended for use by boards of trustees and directors generally.



## THE LIBRARY'S SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

This division of the subject is that which has been most discussed, and its subject matter is that in which most progress has been made. It is creditable to libraries that what they do for the public has extended and developed to a marvelously greater degree than what the public does for them. Whether it is equally creditable to the public "is another story." The first seven papers reproduced bear on the subject of library service in a somewhat general manner and are arranged chronologically.



## SOME POPULAR OBJECTIONS TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

This is probably the first treatment of the subject in this country, and is the leading article in the second number of *The American Library Journal*, as it was then called. The writer, William F. Poole was at the time librarian of the Chicago Public Library. He mentioned objections only to explain them away. It will be noted that none of them would be described at present as "popular," and that only the third is now much heard.

William Frederick Poole was born in Salem, Mass., 1821, and graduated at Yale in 1849, where as librarian of the Linonian and Brothers Library he founded Poole's Index to Periodical Literature, by which his name is chiefly remembered. He was librarian of the Chicago Public Library in 1873-87, and at his death, March 1, 1894, he was librarian of the Newberry Library, Chicago, whose building he designed on the departmental system, of which he was an earnest advocate. He was the second president of the American Library Association, serving in 1885-87.

In this paper I shall use the term "public libraries" as meaning free municipal libraries organized under State laws and supported by general taxation. This definition will exclude from our notice a large number of libraries established on other foundations, some of them richly endowed and partially accessible to the public.

The rapid increase in the number and importance of public libraries, both in this country and in England, is perhaps the most marked feature of educational development during the past

twenty-five years; for within that brief period the first of them was opened to the public.

My subject, as announced in the programme, requires me to speak of popular objections; yet I must confess that popular appreciation of these institutions, where they have been established, would have furnished a more attractive theme. As their foundation involves taxation, that prolific source of political controversy, it is somewhat remarkable that in the eleven States of our Union where public-library statutes have been enacted, so little public discussion has occurred, and so few objections have been offered. I have heard of no instance where such a bill was proposed in a State legislature and was defeated. That all the Northern States, where general education and the common-school system are established, have not by legislation provided also for the public library—the natural ally and supplement of that system—is doubtless owing to the fact that the people have not asked for such legislation. The unanimity of the vote by which towns have accepted taxation for the support of public libraries is significant. The Commissioner of Education at Washington recently made inquiries on this point, and received replies from 37 towns and cities. In 32 of these the vote was unanimous; in 5 there was a divided sentiment, but the vote was 1730 in favor to 515 against taxation. The vote of the rate-payers in some English towns and cities where free libraries have been established was as follows:

	Ayes.	Noes.
Manchester .....	3962	40
Winchester .....	337	13
Bolton .....	662	55
Cambridge .....	873	78
Oxford .....	596	72
Sheffield .....	838	232
Kidderminster .....	108	11
Blackburn .....	1700	2
Dundee, no dissentient.		

By the latest statistics of the Bureau of Education, it appears that there are 188 public libraries in eleven of the United States. Of these five are Eastern States—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut; five are Western States—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa: and one is a

Southern State—Texas. Eight of these States have passed public-library statutes within the past ten years. In the number of libraries the States rank as follows: Massachusetts, 127; Illinois, 14; New Hampshire, 13; Ohio, 9; Maine, 8; Vermont, Connecticut, and Wisconsin, 4 each; Indiana, 3; Iowa and Texas, 1 each. In the number of volumes they rank as follows (in round numbers): Massachusetts, 920,000; Ohio, 144,000; Illinois, 77,000; New Hampshire, 52,000; Maine, 34,000; Indiana, 26,000; Vermont, 16,000; Connecticut, 15,000; Texas, 10,000; Wisconsin, 6000; Iowa, 1000. The aggregate number of volumes in these libraries is 1,300,000, and their annual aggregate circulation is 4,735,000 volumes. It is noticeable that no one of these libraries is in New York, Pennsylvania, or any of the Middle States. The representatives from those States in this Conference may be able to account for this hiatus in the statistics of the Bureau of Education.

In this brief sketch of the statistics of our American public libraries we have not found much evidence of popular objections to their inception and organization. In England, however, where the questions of national schools, secular schools, and parochial schools are still mooted, the idea of levying a general tax for the support of a library free to all, and furnished with books adapted to the capacities of all classes, was not in harmony with the traditions and public policy of that people. In 1848, the same year that the Legislature of Massachusetts, at the suggestion of Josiah Quincy, Mayor of Boston, passed an act authorizing the city of Boston to maintain a public library, Mr. William Ewart, member of Parliament, moved in the House of Commons for a committee of inquiry respecting libraries. Such a committee was raised, and Mr. Ewart was appointed chairman. Much evidence was taken; a report was made; and in February, 1850, a bill was introduced into the House of Commons enabling town councils to establish public libraries and museums. "Our younger brethren, the people of the United States," says the report, "have already anticipated us in the formation of libraries entirely open to the public." The bill proposed limited the rate of taxation to one halfpenny in the pound; required the affirmative vote of two thirds of the rate-payers; restricted its operation to towns which had at least ten thousand inhabitants; and provided that the money so raised should be expended only in building and contingent expenses. This bill, meagre indeed

compared with the later enactments of Parliament, met persistent opposition from the conservative benches. An ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer objected because it did not give sufficient powers to form a library; and he should object to it more strongly if it did. Who was to select the books? Was every publication that issued from the press to be procured? or was there to be a censorship introduced? Another member claimed that the bill would enable a few persons to tax the general body of rate-payers for their own benefit, and the library would degenerate into a political club. Col. Sibthorp thought that, however excellent food for the mind might be, food for the body was more needed by the people. "I do not like reading at all," he said, "and hated it when I was at Oxford." Lord John Manners said he could not support the bill, because it would impose an additional tax upon the agricultural interest. Mr. Spooner feared these institutions might be converted into normal schools of agitation. Sir Roundell Palmer—since the Lord Chancellor of England—was most apprehensive that the moment the compulsory principle was introduced, a positive check would be imposed upon the voluntary, self-supporting desire which existed among the people. A division being taken on the bill, there were 118 ayes and 101 noes. The bill passed the House of Commons in July, and the House of Lords, without opposition, in August, 1850.

The Manchester, Liverpool, and Bolton free libraries were immediately organized under this act, the cost of the books being defrayed by public subscription. In 1853 similar legislation was extended to Scotland and Ireland. In July, 1855, the new libraries having gone into operation with the most encouraging results, a new and more liberal library act was passed, by a vote of three to one, which raised the rate of taxation from a half-penny to a penny in the pound, and allowed the income to be expended for books. Its provisions were made to include towns, boroughs, parishes, and districts having a population of 5000 inhabitants, and permitted two adjoining parishes, having an aggregate population of five thousand, to unite in the establishment of a library.

In 1866 the library act was again improved by removing the limit of population required, and reducing the two-thirds vote on the acceptance of the library tax to a bare majority vote. Provision was also made for cases in which the overseers of



parishes refused or neglected to call a meeting of the rate-payers to vote on the question. Any ten rate-payers could secure the calling of such a meeting, and the vote there taken was made binding and legal.

The English free-library system is now so firmly established that it will not be changed except to expand and enlarge it. Its chief supporters are the middle classes, and artisans and laborers, who, with their families, are its most numerous patrons.

The recent extension of suffrage in England has strengthened the system. No candidate for official position who opposed it could hope for success. It has been found that free libraries have not degenerated into political clubs and schools of agitation. No trouble has arisen in the selection of books, and no censorship of the press was required. It was at first supposed that all books relating to religion and politics—the subjects on which people quarrel most—must be excluded. The experiment of including these books was tried in the Manchester and Liverpool libraries, where the books were purchased by private subscription, and no controversy arising therefrom, all apprehension of evil from this cause was allayed. Parliament doubled the rate of taxation, and permitted the purchase of books from the public funds. The adoption of the compulsory system has not imposed a check on the voluntary and self-supporting desire of possessing books which existed among the people. It has strengthened that desire; and ample proof of this statement could be furnished if the prescribed limits of this paper would permit.

It is singular that objections to public libraries have come mainly from men—as we have seen from the debate in the British Parliament—who are educated, and in general matters of public welfare are intelligent above their fellows. These objections, however, were uttered before the persons making them had given the subject any attention, and hence they were disqualified from entertaining an opinion.

Nearly all the objections to public libraries which have been expressed in this country—and these appear more frequently in private conversation than in the public prints—may be classed under three heads:

1. The universal dread of taxation. Libraries cost money. In every city and town of the land there is a feeling that the present rate of taxation is all that the property and business of

the place will bear. This feeling existed before the taxes were one half their present rates. There is a generous rivalry among our cities and towns in the maintenance of good schools; and localities which furnish the best facilities for education are regarded as the most desirable places for residence. Viewed simply as a matter of public economy, no city can afford to dispend with its educational system, or to permit it to degenerate. The public library also should be maintained as the supplement of the public school, carrying forward the education of the people from the point where the public school leaves it.

2. There are certain theoretical objections offered to the establishment and maintenance of public libraries. One is that the library tax bears unequally upon the people. Some persons do not care to read books, and others prefer to pay for their own reading. The same objection is quite as valid against any system of public education. To lay the burden of education uniformly upon property, and to tax the owner who has no children, or, having children, prefers to educate them at private schools, is another glaring instance of inequality. No taxation for the maintenance of public health, the introduction of water and gas, the construction of roads, bridges, and sewers, bears equally upon every member of the community. If perfect equality in the distribution of these burdens were a necessity, an organized municipality would be an impossibility.

Perhaps the most popular objection to public libraries is the one urged by the few disciples of Herbert Spencer—that government has no legitimate function except the protection of person and property, as the original compact of society is simply for the purpose of protection. All else is paternal, pertains to the commune, and tends to perpetual antagonism. The government may support a police, courts of justice, prisons, penitentiaries, and similar institutions, and can do nothing else.

How are the people under this theory to be educated? The reply is explicit: Unless they will educate themselves, they are not to be educated. How is the public health to be maintained? It is not to be maintained by any interference of government. Who is to build bridges and sewers and lay out public parks? Nobody. Imagine, if it be possible, a community where such a Utopian theory was carried out. Such a government fortunately does not, and never did, exist on the face of the globe. The "general welfare"—which includes protection—is expressly

stated in the preamble of the national constitution to be the purpose of our government, and the same expression is found in nearly all the state constitutions. What ever the people desire, and whatever will, in their judgment, conduce to the general welfare, is a legitimate subject for governmental action. "The only orthodox object of the institution of government," says Mr. Jefferson, "is to secure the greatest degree of happiness possible to the general mass of those associated under it." Herbert Spencer wrote his "Social Statics" before the British Parliament passed an act for the support of public libraries. Mr. Ewart's bill was then before Parliament; and Mr. Spencer, in that work, took occasion to fling a sneer at it. In the preface of his American edition, written in 1864, he states, without remodelling the text, that "the work does not accurately represent his present opinions."

3. The third and last class of objections to public libraries to which I shall direct your attention relates to the kind and quality of books circulated. These objections, which are usually made by educated and scholarly persons, are based on an entire misconception of the facts in the case. The objectors do not divest themselves of the old idea that libraries are established for the exclusive benefit of scholars; whereas the purpose of these is to furnish reading for all classes in the community. On no other principle would a general tax for their support be justifiable. The masses of a community have very little of literary and scholarly culture. They need more of this culture, and the purpose of the library is to develop and increase it. This is done by placing in their hands such books as they can read with pleasure and appreciate, and by stimulating them to acquire the *habit* of reading. We must first interest the reader before we can educate him; and, to this end, must commence at his own standard of intelligence. The scholar, in his pride of intellect, forgets the progressive steps he took in his own mental development—the stories read to him in the nursery, the boy's book of adventure in which he revelled with delight, and the sentimental novel over which he shed tears in his youth. Our objector supposes that the masses will read books of his standard if they were not supplied with the books to which he objects; but he is mistaken. Shut up to this choice, they will read no books. When the habit of reading is once acquired, the reader's taste, and hence the quality of his reading, progressively improve.

The standard histories, technical works of science, and even Shakespeare's plays and Milton's "Paradise Lost," are sealed books to a larger portion of every community than are willing to acknowledge the fact. "When a Boy," said John Quincy Adams, "I attempted ten times to read Milton's 'Paradise Lost.' I was mortified, even to the shedding of tears, that I could not conceive what it was that my father and mother so much admired in that book. I smoked tobacco and read Milton at the same time, and for the same motive: to find out what was the recondite charm in them that gave my father so much pleasure. After making myself sick four or five times with smoking, I mastered that accomplishment; but I did not master Milton. I was nearly thirty years of age when I first read 'Paradise Lost' with delight and astonishment."

If our objectors mourn over the standard of books which are read by the public, they may be consoled by the fact that, as a rule, people read books better than themselves, and hence are benefited by reading. A book of a lower intellectual or moral standard than the reader's is thrown aside in disgust, to be picked up and read by a person still lower in the scale of mental and moral development.

I do not lament, or join in the clamor sometimes raised, over the statistics of prose fiction circulated at public libraries. Why this lamentation over one specific form of fiction? The writers of such prose fiction as is found in our libraries were as eminent and worthy men and women as the writers of poetical fiction, dramatic fiction, or, I might add, the fiction which passes in the world as history and biography. History professes to relate actual events, biography to describe actual lives, and science to unfold and explain natural laws and physical phenomena. Fiction treats these and other subjects, mental, moral, sentimental, and divine, from an ideal or artistic standpoint; and the great mass of readers prefer to take their knowledge in this form. More is known to-day of the history and traditions of Scotland, and of the social customs of London, from the novels of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens than from all the histories of those localities. Fiction is the art element in literature, and the most enduring monuments of genius in the literature of any people are works of the imagination.

It is said that there is much poor fiction, and the statement is true. So there are many poor pictures and poor statues,

wretched chromos and more wretched plaster casts. That these productions find purchasers is evidence that there are persons whose ideal standard of excellence is even below these feeble efforts, and they are educated thereby.

But there are novels, we are told, which are immoral and positively debasing. So there are immoral paintings and indecent plastic objects. The act of photography, I am told, is debased to the lowest purposes. Nobody would think of objecting to art because it can be and is degraded. The librarian who should allow an immoral novel in his library for circulation would be as culpable as the manager of a picture gallery who should hang an indecent picture on his walls.

Young people, again, we are told, read too many novels. So they eat too much, play too much, go too often to the lake to bathe, remain too long in the water, and do too much of everything in which they take special delight. The remedy is not to deprive children of these pleasures, but that parents and guardians should regulate them. I have never met a person of much literary culture who would not confess that at some period in his life, usually in his youth, he had read novels excessively. His special interest in them suddenly ceased. He found himself with a confirmed habit of reading, an awakened imagination, a full vocabulary, and a taste for other and higher classes of literature. A novel was read occasionally in later life, as recreation in the midst of professional or technical studies. My observation addressed to this point, and extending over a library experience of thirty years, has confirmed me in the belief that there is in the mental development of every person who later attains to literary culture a limited period when he craves novel-reading, and perhaps reads novels to excess; but from which, if the desire be gratified, he passes safely out into broader fields of study, and this craving never returns to him in its original form.

Again, and finally, we are told that the reading of fiction should be discouraged because it is not *true*. What department of literature is true? Is it history? Whose history of the United States, for instance, is the true history? Is it Bancroft's? Mr. Bancroft for forty years has been changing the plates of his work to an extent that in pages we can scarcely recognize the original text, and lately he has revised the whole in the new Centennial edition. The accurate student of specialties in American history will talk to you by the hour of mis-



statements and errors found in this new issue. Whose history of the reigns of Henry VIII. and of Queen Elizabeth is the true one? Is it Hume's, Turner's, Lingard's, or Froude's? "Do not read to me history," said a sick monarch, "that I know is a lie. Read to me something that is true." Is biography true? Which of the score of lives of Mary Queen of Scots is the true biography? Is theology true? Whose is the true body of divinity? Is science true? Why was it necessary to rewrite all the science in the eighth edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, for the ninth edition? Homer's Iliad, Dante's Divine Comedy, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Othello, do not require to be rewritten every ten or twenty years. The Vicar of Wakefield, Ivanhoe, and Robinson Crusoe have held and will hold their own from generation to generation without revision, because they are *ideally true* pictures of human life and human nature. Shall we say that in literature and science there is nothing true but fiction and the pure mathematics?

In the public libraries which are growing up in our land, fully four fifths of the money appropriated for books is spent in works adapted to the wants of scholars. In the larger libraries the proportion is even greater. It is hardly becoming for scholars, who enjoy the lion's share, to object to the small proportional expenditure for books adapted to the wants of the masses who bear the burden of taxation.

Mr. Edward Edwards, of the Manchester Library, speaking, in 1859, of novels and romances—which he circulated more freely than is done in any American library—remarked as follows: "It may be truthfully said that at no previous period in the history of English literature has prose fiction been made, in so great a degree as of late years, the vehicle of the best thoughts of some of the best thinkers. Nor, taking it as a whole, was it ever before characterized by so much general purity of tone or loftiness of purpose."



## HOW TO USE A LIBRARY

The substance of two addresses made at Pittsfield, Mass., and printed in *The Library Journal* for February, 1884. Mr. Hubbard's advice with regard to children's reading was followed long ago by specialization in work with children. That with regard to adult fiction remains unheeded. Some day, possibly we shall have "adults' librarians" and training for "work with adults."

James Mascarene Hubbard was born in Boston in 1836. He was made assistant librarian of the Boston Public Library in 1884 and also reorganized the Berkshire Athenaeum of Pittsfield, Mass., in the same year.

Among all the pictures of Abraham Lincoln none perhaps are more interesting than two which represent scenes at the beginning and at the end of his life. In the first, a lad of thirteen or fourteen, he is reading by the light of a fire in his father's log hut. In the second, he is reading the Bible to his sons in a room in the White House. This Bible, which lies before the President in the latter picture, with a catechism and a spelling-book, were the only books in that frontier cabin when he learned to read. Though his father could neither read nor write, yet he took the greatest interest in getting books for his son, so that when he was eighteen his library consisted of the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, Æsop's Fables, Weem's and Ramsay's Lives of Washington, a Life of Clay, the Autobiography of Franklin, and a copy of Plutarch. It is note-worthy that the one which influenced him the most strongly, after the Bible, was the Life of Washington. At the very crisis of his career, when on his way to the national capital to take the leading part in crushing out the rebellion, he reverted to those early days, and recalled the burning thoughts which filled his mind while reading of the sufferings and sacrifices endured for the sake of freedom by the great patriot leader and his followers.

Lincoln's experience was, of course, no solitary one, but it doubtless had a great effect when it became generally known. It filled many men's imaginations with pictures of obscure lads with latent powers for noble deeds in danger of being stunted or wholly destroyed for want of proper nourishment, and they gave freely and generously that these "village Hampdens," these hearts "pregnant with sacred fire," might not live useless and ignoble lives for want of books alone. Hence to-day a large section of our country is dotted over with libraries, in which the collective wisdom and experience of the world, as it were, are gathered for the use especially of the youth of the nation.

But, as is inevitable with the blessing of abundance, has come its danger also. Lincoln's naturally great intellectual powers were strengthened by their being at first exercised upon a few subjects. The possession of a book being an era in his early life from its rarity, he read and re-read each one which he got, so as almost to learn it by heart before he read another. So the vivid impressions received from the lives of Washington and the other great heroes of history ran no risk of being dissipated before they could have their full effect upon his mind and heart. This, however, is our danger in this day of public libraries and cheap literature, that the mental strength of our youth will be weakened through the too much reading of a multitude of books. As the waters of a brook when confined to a narrow channel may have power enough to set in motion a thousand spindles, but if suffered to spread over the ground are not able to turn a child's toy wheel, so with the powers of the mind. When directed to a few objects they may be capable of the greatest and most beneficent results, but when allowed to exhaust themselves upon a multitude they are in danger of becoming sterile and unfruitful. With Lincoln then, and with many a frontier and backwoods boy now, the question was and is, How shall I get a book? With a greater number to-day, however, the more important question is, Which book shall I choose?

Before attempting to aid any one to answer this question for himself, let me briefly advert to the fact that there are two kinds of reading for each of us, and two corresponding uses, therefore, of the library—the reading for amusement and the reading for profit. In regard to the former, I can say but a word, as it is a subject by itself. And that word is, let this reading be the best possible, and do not let it occupy too much

of your spare time. Books read simply for amusement have on most a greater power to elevate or degrade than any others, and more care should be taken in selecting them than in the choice of those to be read for instruction. Read then, and put into the hands of the young the best fiction, and shun those writers, whatever their power or their popularity, who reproduce in their books the slang and vulgar speech of the streets and paint realistic scenes of vice and crime.

The answer to the question, *How or what shall I read?* must necessarily be as varied as the tastes, the talents, and the circumstances of readers vary. The general aim, however, should be the same in all. We should read in order to do well whatever we have to do in life. Now this implies something more than the reading simply to increase one's knowledge—certainly a worthy aim, but not the highest. The field of knowledge is so broad and the time for reading so short that we must necessarily choose those subjects, the knowledge of which will make us better fitted for our work in life. And the mere seeking for knowledge, which is the sole end of much reading, does not imply, but may even prevent the attaining that higher end, the cultivation of our nobler powers, as the imagination and the sympathies, and the gaining the power of appreciating what is highest and best in literature and life. For instance, one may be conscious of a total lack of a love for any great writer. To him Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and their peers are but names. Now it may be that the best use to which such an one can put a library is to make at least the attempt to understand and enjoy some great author. It will be no easy task, but one needing and worthy the hardest study. To take, as an illustration of one method, a lesser poet, read carefully and thoughtfully Matthew Arnold's introduction to his edition of the selected poems of Wordsworth. Whenever he refers to a poem, read it before going farther and re-read it until the thought of the poet as indicated by the commentator is reasonably clear. Then read in the same manner what Coleridge, Shairp, F. W. Robertson, or any other good critic has written upon Wordsworth. And, above all, sometimes read the poems as nearly as possible in the same circumstances under which they were written—in the forest, by the brook-side, in the solitudes of the mountains, or on a bridge in the heart of a great city. If this fail to awaken an interest in Wordsworth, try some other au-

thor in a similar way, and it is impossible that of all who have stirred men's hearts through the ages, no one can be found to arouse your sympathies. And when the right author is at length found, you live on a higher plane than before. This great poet, philosopher, or dramatist has become your friend and familiar companion—a gain far greater than the acquirement of any mere book knowledge.

The greater part of another person's life may be spent in sordid surroundings, with companions and in an occupation tending to depress and degrade the better nature. I can easily conceive that it might be the highest duty of such an one to remain ignorant of much useful knowledge in order to quicken the imagination, to enlarge the tastes, and heighten the enjoyments. So that when the day's work is done, he may exchange the sordid companions, suggestive only of mean thoughts and low aims, for intercourse with men of purest and noblest nature—men, too, it may be, who have lived, thought, and written under circumstances as depressing as those in which he lives and works. So there may be some one who regretfully feels that in Nature there is nothing which gives to him, as to others, the keenest pleasure, refreshing him when wearied, encouraging him when downcast. Who sees nothing in the skies save signs of the coming storm, nothing in the trees or flowers, the rivers or the hills, save something relating to his material comfort or discomfort. The best use to which this man could put a library and his reading hours might be to study the works of the great interpreters of nature, as White of Selborne, Ruskin, or Emerson. And if they should open his eyes so that he can look "through Nature up to Nature's God," his gain is immeasurable.

Now, in neither of these instances is the increase of knowledge the aim set before the reader, but the development of some dwarfed faculty whose growth is necessary to the leading of a noble life. But where the increase of knowledge is the direct end sought, the value of the knowledge in itself must not be that alone which decides one in the choice of books, or incites him to reading, but the use to which it can and ought to be put. An employer of labor, for instance, one who is immediately responsible for the welfare of a large number of workmen, cannot, with any true conception of his duty as a master, devote his time for reading to acquiring a knowledge of history, science, or literature, if he know nothing of the principles underlying the

relations of capital to labor, if he is ignorant of the dangers, the temptations, the needs and rights of his workpeople. However well-informed on other subjects, he has read to far less advantage than if his books had been chosen with a direct purpose to fit him to do his duty as a master. So many a parent ought, for a time at least, to read with a view wholly to prepare himself for the wise moral and mental training of his children. And on the other hand a man should read the history of his country, not merely that he may not blush from conscious ignorance of it, but that, knowing what his heritage of freedom cost to obtain, he may also come to the conviction that it is not his to enjoy simply, but it is a sacred trust to be accounted for, however humble his position. It could not be more humble than Lincoln's, and yet none can doubt that to the spirit in which he read American history was largely due his future fitness for the great work which God gave him to do.

To what highest and most profitable use can I put my reading? is the question then which each one should ask himself, and according as the answer is, so should the choice be made. It may be that one will read that he may understand better his duties and privileges as a citizen; another, that he may be a just master, or an intelligent and faithful workman; still another, that she may be a wise parent; while a fourth may have the strong conviction that everything else should be laid aside for the study of one of the masterpieces of the world's literature, that he may develop his higher faculties and become a man thinking lofty thoughts and capable of noble deeds.

But there is a very large class of readers, especially of a public library, to whom what I have just said will be of but little use. And as it is upon them that the choice of books has the greatest influence for good or evil, it is to speak of their interests that I turn with the deepest solicitude. This class may be subdivided into two classes—the children of intelligent parents who are capable of directing their reading, and those children who have none to guide them in their choice. As regards the former, one of the greatest dangers of the public library, in my opinion, is that many parents throw off all responsibility as to the books their children read upon those who have charge of the library. A generation ago, all the books, as a rule, which the young read were bought especially for them by their parents or friends, with more or less care in the selection. Of course under these cir-



cumstances they had a general knowledge of what their children read. Now a great many parents neither know, nor do they apparently seem to care to know, what books fall into their children's hands, so long as they are from the public library, which is supposed to be a guarantee for their fitness for young readers. Without entering here upon the important question as to what books should or should not be put in a public library, it is enough to say that no intelligent parent, with a right idea of his duty toward his children, can properly lay this responsibility upon persons, however carefully chosen or however faithful in the discharge of their duties. The capacity of children for receiving good or bad impressions from books differs, as their features and forms vary. The same story might prove harmless to one boy and give a moral twist to another's mind from which he might never recover. One girl might receive from a book a hundred evil suggestions, hopelessly depraving her imagination, while upon another it might not leave a single evil trace. Now, it is not possible for the most scrupulous librarian to discriminate between these two, and refuse the book to the one and freely give it to the other. And therefore no library with a large and miscellaneous collection of stories and novels can be safe for children freely to use except under the careful supervision of their parents. The only safeguard of which I know is for parents to read much with their children, to interest themselves in their books, and to talk with them about them. Those stories, for instance, against which there has been such an outcry of late years, would have but small power to hurt that boy to whom a father had taken the pains to point out the absurdities, the unrealities, the false ideas and aims of which they are accused.

But in our cities and large towns there can be no doubt that the greater number of the younger readers of a public library belong to the second of the two classes referred to—those who have none to guide them in the choice of their books. The most of these come, of course, simply for amusement, without a thought of any better use of the library. But a few come with other and higher aims. Some, with no specially strong tastes or more than ordinary capacities, merely wish to read that which will cultivate their minds and increase their knowledge, or will be profitable to them in their work. A very few there are, however, in every large town, with intellects of no mean order and strong ambitions, who turn to the library instinctively for that



which will satisfy the cravings of their intellects and the promptings of their ambitions. A youth with the instincts of a Lincoln or a Webster comes to read the history of his country. Another, with the latent powers of a Nasmyth, a Stevenson, or an Arkwright, wants the books which will give full play to his inventive faculties. Another finds a strange and irresistible attraction in natural phenomena, in the habits of plants and animals, in the formation of the rocks and the hills, in the aspects of the skies and the movements of the stars. Now, it will depend very much upon the first choice of their books, and the subsequent direction of their reading, whether they will become men useful to the communities in which they live and add substantial material to the sum of human knowledge, as statesmen, inventors, naturalists, or astronomers. The danger is that, for lack of proper guidance and restraint, they will dissipate their mental energies and lose sight of all high aims by too much and too vague reading. If the public library is to be in fact, what it is in theory, an educating power second only to the church and the school, and supplementing the work of both, there must be some method devised by which such readers as these may be helped to choose the right books. Without such aid, given continually and systematically, the library fails in the principal end for which it was founded—the elevation and instruction of the people. We might as well turn our children into a school-house, fully furnished with books and apparatus, but with only a janitor to see that no injury is done to them, and expect the children to make a wise use of their opportunities, to take up and pursue the proper studies without the aid of a master, as to give children the free range of a great library and expect them undirected to make a wise use of its advantages as a means of education. It is, therefore, in my opinion, a most pernicious error to encourage young people, of the lower classes especially, to come to a library, and to give them poor stories in the mistaken belief that, the taste for reading being developed, they will naturally and surely rise from these to better books. Such a belief is contrary to all our experience of human nature. With careful guidance and restraint a boy may be brought from the Dime novel to read Scott and Macaulay. But without this restraint and guidance, where one will rise, a hundred, a thousand rather, will remain at the level from which they started, or more naturally sink to still lower depths.

The question is, Can anything be done to help the young who throng our public libraries to read well and wisely? Shall these boys and girls, with their unknown powers both for good and evil, be left to grope helplessly amid these treasures of wisdom and knowledge which our libraries contain, or shall the attempt at least be made to give them a kindly and intelligent guidance? This work, of such incalculable importance, I hasten to say, is already well done to a certain extent by a few librarians in the country. But it is a work which requires time, patience, tact, an insight into character, and a very varied and extensive knowledge. It is evident that the librarians who combine these requisites are few in number. It is a work which cannot be done by them as a class. Nor can it be done by the ordinary catalogues, however skilfully prepared. For it is evident that there needs to be some personal knowledge of each reader's capacities in order to help him intelligently and profitably. Nor is it something which the school-teachers, willing though many of them are, can do, except in a limited degree, as many of those who need help are not school-children. There are, however, a few persons in every town fitted by their education and their circumstances in life for this work, and it is to them we must finally appeal.

The most practical plan, presenting on the whole the fewest difficulties, seems to be the following: Let those persons who are willing to make the attempt to give this instruction in reading choose each a subject, as general History, the History of the United States, Science, Travels, Biography, Fiction, or Children's stories, and see what their public library contains on these subjects. In due time notice could be given that all persons wishing help in the choice of books in any of these subjects could be aided by applying to the librarian. He would refer the inquirer to that person who has chosen this subject, who will naturally endeavor to find out something of the character, circumstances, and abilities of the applicant before selecting the books best fitted in his or her opinion for him to read. No doubt, at first, there would be few to apply, and mistakes would be made from lack of experience. But, if only one reader was substantially aided, if only one bright youth was rescued from the danger of dissipating his energies by aimless or depraving reading, all the labor would be amply rewarded, to say nothing of the benefit which the guide himself, in preparing for his work, would receive. I do not believe, however, that the appli-

cants for guidance would be few, when it was known among the work-people of our mills, our shops and stores, among the poor, that every one coming to the library asking for aid would find some one ready, as it were, to take him by the hand, and lead him from book to book, so long as he needed help. I am confident that it would be an invaluable service if some one or two persons should take the pains to become acquainted with the character of the books for the children and the novels contained in a library. There are many parents who feel instinctively the truth of the words of F. W. Robertson, that "a man's character and mind are moulded for good or evil far more by the forms of imagination which surround his childhood than by any subsequent scientific training." Many an anxious but ignorant parent who sees in her boys and girls a craving for books, at which she rejoices with trembling, would turn with heart-felt gratitude—I speak with the fullest confidence, because I speak from experience—to one who would give them advice as to the books which their children might safely read and those which they should shun.

It is only by some such means as this that the public library can be made a real educating power for the masses. In far too many places, now, it is simply a place where children can get story-books at the public expense. This cannot long continue, and I believe that the greater part of the libraries which continue to do this work without an effort to fulfil their higher mission, will surely and inevitably die, as the District School and Agricultural libraries died fifty years ago. The responsibility rests with the people of each place where there is a public library, as to which of two ends shall be reached. It may be merely a means for furnishing amusement for an hour, or it may be a central beacon from whence the rays of light shall stream into every house.



## ADAPTATION OF LIBRARIES TO CONSTITUENCIES

Prepared by Samuel S. Green, then librarian of the Worcester, Mass. Public Library and a member of the State Library Commission, for the World's Library Congress held at the Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893) and printed in the government report thereon. The "adaptation" favored by Mr. Green consists in weeding out unfitting books. Melvil Dewey, as editor of this volume of papers, tells us in a foot-note that in the discussion of Mr. Green's paper, this process was not generally approved except as the first step in a transfer to other libraries. President Eliot's suggestion of reservoir libraries for storage is a later stage, in the same line of thought. A sketch of Mr. Green appears in Vol. I. of this series.

A resident of a Massachusetts town to which the Commonwealth was about to give \$100 worth of books came to secure my influence as a member of the State free public library commission to have a large part of the \$100 spent for rare and expensive books on Massachusetts history. As a large and valuable library made up principally of books of that class was soon to be given to another small town in the same county, it would

NOTE.—With this paper should be read those pages of the Chicago discussions in which it was pointed out by leading librarians that to weed out safely would require much costly expert service; that the most hurtful criticism would be attacks after inevitable cases where some one would greatly wish a book that had been withdrawn as useless; that the printed catalogs already circulated would be made untrustworthy by parting with any volume included; that what one wise and learned man would throw out as trash, another equally wise and learned would consider specially valuable because of differing personal equations. In short, that however excellent in theory, it was perhaps the most difficult thing in librarianship to put successfully in practice.

While few favored "weeding out" simply to gain room by getting rid of books little wanted, many believe in transferring to other libraries which have a distinctly greater need of them.—M. D.

have been manifestly unwise to grant this request. It seems unwise also to place a students' library in a small town where there are few who will use it. It would be better to give the library to a flourishing institution at a county seat, on condition that it shall be open for free consultation by all residents of the county, and that, under proper rules, books may be lent from it to inhabitants of smaller towns for use at home.

In this way the library would be so placed that most persons wishing to make investigations would have the books near home, and the comparatively few investigators in the smaller towns, such as the man in the town first mentioned, would also have their interests provided for.

The trustees of the Thomas Crane Public Library at Quincy, Mass., have concluded, utilizing the experience of many years, that a working library of 15,000 volumes is sufficient to supply the general wants of the 20,000 residents of the city. It is proposed not to let the library grow beyond 20,000 volumes while the wants of the city remain what they are, and when it exceeds that number of volumes to cut it down by taking out books that never have been needed in a popular library like that in Quincy or that have become useless. It having become evident that an addition would presently have to be made to the building if the recent rate of increase should continue, it seemed best to the trustees to begin at once to reduce the size of the library. They proceeded, under the able leadership of Mr. Charles Francis Adams, to remove from the library large numbers of Government documents, unnecessary duplicates, books of an outgrown ephemeral interest, and those unsuited to the locality. Twenty-one hundred and forty-five volumes were removed immediately. The Quincy library, by adopting this course, relieves itself from very considerable prospective expenses and secures money to use in increasing its usefulness.

Part of the plan is to keep the printed catalogs of the small library up to date and to scatter copies of them widely throughout the city by selling them at a nominal price. It is always expensive to prepare and print a good catalog; it is very expensive to issue new editions frequently. Still, if a popular library is to do its work well it must introduce its constituents to its books by means of frequent revised editions of a good, printed catalog.

The Thomas Crane Library has been famous for the excellence of its annotated catalog and for lists of books on special



subjects for the use of school children. It proposes in future to use more money than in the past in making, printing, and keeping up to date good catalogs, and, in order to make it practicable to do so, to keep down the number of volumes in the library, thus reducing the expenses of cataloging, and also to save money in housing its books. That is to say, it is acting on the well-established principle that a small library well cataloged, if at all adapted in the number of its volumes to the size of a town, is of incalculably greater advantage to its constituency than one many times larger but poorly equipped with catalogs.

It is a distinctive feature of the Quincy plan not to make the library a special reference library. That city is very near Boston and Cambridge, which it is well known are richly supplied with large general and numerous special libraries.

When a man appears in Quincy who wishes to make a minute inquiry on some special subject, it is proposed to refer him to the great libraries in the neighboring cities, and to confine the efforts of the trustees of the Quincy library to supplying the general wants of its constituency. Here, then, is a bold attempt at adapting a library to its constituency. Shall it be seconded?

Many will hold it unwise to discuss such a subject publicly. Remembering many ill-judged efforts at economy by ignorant, uneducated, or parsimonious men in town meetings and on library boards, they will pronounce it hurtful to libraries to point out to such men that some library experts consider it well to keep down expenses for cataloging and housing books by weeding out libraries. Perhaps they are right. Whether they are so or not, however, their objection is too late. The matter now under consideration is undergoing public discussion, and it is important that men having special knowledge of library matters should contribute now the results of their experience. Unreasonable men in town meetings and in boards of trustees must be answered, and reasonable men and women need to understand thoroughly the subject in order that their answers may be discriminating and wise.

Once, when the Librarian of Congress asked that an addition be made to the library rooms, a member is said to have urged that instead of enlarging the Capitol, the library should be weeded out. Such a plan would be regarded generally as exceedingly foolish.

There must be in many parts of this broad land large and

growing libraries which will aim to gather very large general and special collections not limited to books of intrinsic merit. Such libraries will have to get many books of little value in themselves to enable students to study subjects historically. It would indeed be very silly to weed out the Congressional Library. Somewhere there should be accessible (and where better than in that library?) every book, pamphlet, and map published in the United States. The Congressional Library should be a great national library like the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and the British Museum.

The Quincy plan would not work well even in a place the size of Worcester, Mass., with a population of only 90,000 or 95,000, and but 44 miles from Boston, for it is a center of important educational institutions and of inquirers, and therefore needs large reference libraries. Cambridge, though very much nearer Boston than Quincy, becomes, because of Harvard University, a center where there must be a large library. It is too great an inconvenience for Harvard professors and students to rely, except for book rarities, on libraries even so near as those in Boston.

On the other hand, consider the John Adams Library at Quincy. It was collected by President John Adams in Europe and America, and undoubtedly contains many valuable books. But is it in place in Quincy? It was formerly kept in the Adams Academy, but not proving useful there, it was transferred to the Thomas Crane Public Library, where it now is. Mr. Charles Francis Adams recently said that he only knew of this John Adams Library having been consulted once in forty years, and that then he was himself the consulter. It is more convenient for Mr. Adams to make his many researches in the great libraries in Boston and Cambridge than in Quincy, and his opinion is that this library should be given to the Boston Public Library, where it would be of great value in supplementing the collections, and would be readily accessible to the class of students who would use it. Perhaps, however, Quincy would be unwilling to give up this library, which marks its connection with a very distinguished man. While it is a distinctive feature of the Quincy plan not to make the public library a special reference library, its success depends on having large reference libraries near at hand. In one respect it encourages making the library a special library, namely, on local interests and history.

As to the saving in expense possible under the Quincy plan, while money is saved which would ordinarily be used in housing books and in other ways, increased expenditure, it should be remembered, is contemplated in frequent issues of improved catalogs. As I shall soon show, the plan, if well carried out, requires other expenditures.

There are many small libraries which do not need weeding. If a library needs weeding, as many undoubtedly do, will it be weeded out wisely?

Broad-minded intelligence is needful for this kind of work, as well as education and experience in library work. An expert is as much needed in this work of weeding out as in selecting books for a library at its start. Great harm might result from injudicious discarding.

Another objection likely to be made to the Quincy plan is that it would often be difficult to decide how large a library is needed in a town or city, and that this difficulty would be magnified in a growing town. Still, if a thing is desirable it should be done in spite of difficulties. Foresight must be exercised and generous provision made for the probable growth of towns, and the number of volumes changed as changes in the size of population or other considerations demand. Supposing a mistake has been made, the weeding has been made with the accessibility in view of large and special libraries in towns and cities near by. Those towns and cities will still remain near to the town which has grown unexpectedly large; their libraries will still be accessible for reference. The difference between the old state of things and the new is likely to be that the books will be used more under changed circumstances than formerly.

But how provide under the Quincy plan for students who can not afford time and money to frequent the large libraries even in towns or cities near by; and supposing this number of special inquirers becomes considerable, can you hope that they will receive a cordial welcome and sympathetic assistance in large neighboring libraries? Dangers here hinted at must be guarded against. Librarians and trustees should be on the lookout for inquirers and help them to get at the books needed.

It is proposed to help them by preparing and issuing often improved printed catalogs. Personal assistance would also evidently be needed under the new plan. In some cases it would be necessary to buy books. In others the investigator might be

introduced to the officers of the library, or by some influential person to the officers of a large neighboring library with reference to his being allowed to borrow if he could not use books on the premises. The same thing might perhaps be better accomplished by a loan from the large to the small library. The small library might have to pay for this privilege. It might be desirable, if an investigator had leisure but not money, for the small library to pay his car fare to the town where the library to be consulted is situated.

Large libraries as now constituted are very obliging, and continually extend courtesies to smaller institutions. The people of Worcester, for example, every week, and sometimes oftener, have books borrowed for their use from the Surgeon-General's library, Washington, from Harvard, the Boston Athenæum, Columbia, Yale, and other libraries. Many institutions are already extending gratuitously such privileges.

Supposing it were to become the custom of small libraries to send books and pamphlets which they can get, but do not need, to large neighboring libraries where they would be useful. Such action would lead to an exchange of various civilities. Then, too, as the desirability of having large libraries help smaller ones by loans of books becomes more and more obvious, will not persons of means give money to the former to enable them to do this kind of work for small towns generally or for particular towns in which they may be specially interested?

Mr. Adams's advice to libraries is, not to accumulate books promiscuously, but to practice a systematic differentiation in collecting. Books which cumber the shelves of one library may be of the greatest value in another. The public documents only of its own town and State, and a few of the national documents relating to matters of general interest, are in place in the library of a small town. But all public documents have come to be of the greatest service in large libraries and in libraries connected with important educational institutions. Even those which seem driest, because exclusively of statistics, are much in demand in colleges where students of history and political economy are required to examine original sources.

Mr. Charles A. Cutter said several years ago, regarding the proper disposition of pamphlets, that local pamphlets should be given to local libraries, professional or scientific pamphlets to

special libraries, miscellaneous and all sorts of pamphlets to larger general libraries. This is excellent advice.

Even large general libraries practice differentiation, many of them excluding professional books and leaving special libraries in their neighborhood to accumulate them. A State library may properly make a specialty of public documents, and perhaps law books, and pay little attention to accumulating other books. A general subscription library with a constituency mainly of people of leisure may find it more useful to collect books in belles-lettres, biography, history, travel, etc., than to buy many dealing with industrial subjects. But a public library in a great manufacturing town, or a special library for architects and engineers, must specialize on technical books.

It is not proposed to destroy books taken out of libraries where they are not needed, but to place them within reach of those most needing them, either through other libraries or auction rooms or secondhand bookstores. No countenance would be given to such a proceeding as that of the administrators of the estate of the well-known collector of old books, Mr. T. O. P. H. Burnham, who are said to have sent a ton or more of material from his stock to the paper mill.<sup>1</sup>

The people of Worcester act more wisely. They empty their attics into the rooms of the American Antiquarian Society or those of the local Society of Antiquity. Housekeepers there, too, dispose similarly of such books as turn up in spring cleaning and are found to be in the way. An extensive system of exchange is in operation under the auspices of the former society, and books and pamphlets sent to the rooms of either society, find their way to persons and libraries where they are needed, and the two antiquarian societies enrich their collections by the exchanges made.

Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson recently stated that a trustee of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, told him that he spent a considerable part of his time in refusing gifts offered to the museum. This trustee is probably wise in declining gifts. There are many books and pamphlets offered to libraries which

<sup>1</sup> It is conceivable that after a lifetime of buying whole attics of rejected books and preserving those which no one would buy at any price, out of an immense stock there might be a ton of duplicate schoolbooks, incomplete volumes, and other books and pamphlets which could not even be given away to any library; since the large libraries would have copies and the smaller ones would not esteem them worth shelf room.—M.D.



they would not find useful. These should be accepted only on condition that they may be placed wherever they will be most valuable.

Differentiation is specially desirable in the smallest libraries. When but little money is available for buying books the small amount should be spent with closest regard to actual needs of the constituency. Not infrequently intelligent entertainment and elementary instruction will be the principles that should guide in selecting books for small libraries. With intelligent cooperation several small neighboring towns might adopt to advantage the suggestion that each of them spend a few dollars a year on a specialty, such as botany, geology, zoology; every town taking a different specialty and all lending to one another.

This paper favors in the main the selection of books with special reference to the actual existing needs of the users of the library. Such an institution as the flourishing public library of Providence, R. I., might properly, if allowable for any library in cities of moderate size, add to its general work some specialty of limited interest. Mr. Foster, its librarian, has recently stated, however, that he thinks that notwithstanding the reputation which the famous Harris collection of poetry gives to the library throughout the country, it is the best for that library to devote itself almost exclusively to supplying the general needs of Providence.

In conclusion, it may be stated that Mr. Adams does not claim that the plan of weeding out libraries adopted at Quincy has never been thought of before. He was not indebted to any book for the idea, but it had occurred to other persons before. Action upon it had always been recommended. Mr. Adams has taken the bull by the horns. He has put the plan in execution and to a considerable extent has systematized it. He has also called attention to it and made it a living subject for discussion.



## RELATION OF FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO THE COMMUNITY

Presentations of Library questions to the general reading public from authoritative sources are exceptionally hard to find, even at the present day. The one reprinted below was contributed to *The North American Review* for June, 1898, by Herbert Putnam, then librarian of the Boston Public Library.

Herbert Putnam was born in New York, Sept. 20, 1861, the youngest son of the founder of the publishing house. He graduated at Harvard in 1883 and studied law. He served as librarian in Minneapolis, first of the Atheneum and then of the Public Library in 1884-91, meanwhile being admitted to the bar in 1886. He practised law in Boston in 1892-95, but in the latter year became librarian of the Boston Public Library, serving until appointed in 1899 Librarian of Congress. His administration has been marked by the development of this institution along the line of service of a national library. During the great war he was Director of Library War Service.

Free libraries have existed for less than a half a century. Their establishment assumed that books are beneficial: but it involved also the assertion that it is the proper function of government to supply books to such of its citizens as may require them at the expense of the community as a whole.

Libraries of this special type do not yet form the major portion of the institutions supplying books on a large scale to groups of persons. Under the head of "Public, Society and School Libraries," these institutions in the United States aggregate 8,000 in number, with 35,000,000 volumes, with \$34,000,000 invested in buildings, with \$17,000,000 of endowments, and with

over \$6,000,000 of annual income. Of these the free public libraries supported by general taxation number less than 2,000, with 10,000,00 volumes, and with less than \$3,500,000 of annual income. They are, however, increasing with disproportionate and amazing rapidity. In Massachusetts, but 10 of the 353 cities and towns, but three-fourths of one per cent. of the inhabitants now lack them. One hundred and ten library buildings there have been the gift of individuals. No form of private memorial is now more popular; no form of municipal expenditure meets with readier assent. Nor are the initiative and the expenditure left wholly to local enterprises. The Commonwealth itself takes part: extending, through a State Commission, State aid in the form of books and continuing counsel. And Massachusetts is but one of eight States maintaining such commissions. New York State, in its system of traveling libraries, has gone further still in supplementing initial aid with a continuing supply of books, and even photographs and lantern slides, purchased by the State and distributed through the Regents of the State University from Albany to the remotest hamlet.

The first stage of all such legislation is an enabling act—authorizing the establishment of a library by the local authorities; the next is an act encouraging such establishment by bounties; and New Hampshire has reached a third by a law actually mandatory, requiring the local authorities to establish free libraries in proportion to their means and the population to be served. This seems to mark the high-water mark of confidence in the utility of these institutions. It indicates that free public libraries are to be ranked with the common schools, as institutions indispensable to good citizenship, whose establishment the State for its own protection must require.

So the movement has progressed, until now these 2,000 public libraries combined are sending out each year over 30 million books, to do their work for good or ill in the homes of the United States. The entire 2,000 result from one conviction and a uniform purpose. Yet among them there is every variety in scope and in organization. There is the hamlet library of a hundred volumes, open for a couple of hours each week in some farm house, under a volunteer custodian, maintained by the town, but enlisting private contribution through bazaars and sociables—sending out its books by the local provision dealer to its remote and scattered constituents. There is the library of

the great city, with elaborate equipment and complex organization to meet a vast and complex need. Such a library as you may find at Chicago; a city which, though it has two great endowed reference libraries, still considers its million and a half people entitled to a municipal library, with a two million dollar building, studded with costly mosaics, and aided by forty branches and stations in bringing the books nearer each home. Or such a library as exists at Boston; organized as a City Department, under Trustees appointed by the Mayor, maintained, like the schools, or the police, or the fire department, by general taxation; with a central building which has cost the city two and one-half million dollars, with ten branch libraries and seventeen delivery stations scattered through the city and reached daily by its delivery wagons; with 700,000 books; and accommodations for over 2,000 readers at one time; including in its equipment such special departments as a bindery and a printing office; requiring for its administration over 250 employes, and for its maintenance each year a quarter of a million dollars, in addition to the proceeds of endowments; and representing in its buildings, books and equipment an investment of over five millions of dollars, the interest on which, at four per cent., to the expenditure for maintenance, is equivalent to an annual burden of \$450,000 for its creation and support.

When this function was first proposed for a municipality, the argument used was that in this country books had come to be the principal instruments of education; that the community was already supporting a public school system; that this system brought a youth to the threshold of education and there left him; that it qualified him to use books, but did nothing to put books within his reach; and finally that it was of "paramount importance that the means of general information should be so diffused that the largest possible number of persons should be induced to read and understand questions going down to the very foundation of social order, which are constantly presenting themselves, and which we, as a people, are constantly required to decide, and do decide, either ignorantly or wisely."

A glance at the libraries now in operation in the United States shows that the ends proposed for them fall far short of the service which they actually perform. They begin with the child before he leaves school; while he is still in his elementary studies they furnish to him books which stir his imagination,

and bring the teaching of the text books into relation with the art and with life. They thus help to render more vivid the formal studies pursued; but they also prepare the child to become an intelligent constituent hereafter. This work cannot begin too early, for four-fifths of the children pass out into active life without reaching the high schools. It need not be deferred, for now the number is almost countless of books that touch with imagination and charm of style even the most elementary subjects; and the library can add illustrations which through the eye convey an impression of the largest subjects in the most elemental way.

If the library begins with the citizen earlier than was foreseen, it is prepared to accompany him further than was thought necessary. It responds not only to the needs of the general reader, but also to those of the student and even, to the extent of its means, to those of the scholar engaged in special research. The maintenance of universities at the common expense is familiar in the West; it is less so in the East. And there is still contention that institutions for highly specialized instruction should not be charged upon the community as a whole. But no one has questioned the propriety of charging upon the community the support of a library whose leading purpose may be the encouragement of the higher scholarship.

Finally, to the services just above described the public library has added another: the supply of books for proposes purely recreative. This service, if anticipated, was certainly not explicitly argued for; nor was it implied in Edward Everett's prediction that the public library would prove the "intellectual common" of the community. The common that Mr. Everett had in mind was a pasturage, not a baseball ground, or lover's walk, or a loafing place for tramps.

But as regards certain of the books customarily supplied, the ordinary public library of to-day is furnishing recreation rather than instruction. In fact, if we look at the history of free public libraries in this country, we find that the one point of practice on which they have been criticised is the supply of merely recreative literature. The protest has come from thoughtful persons, and it means something, lightly as it has been waved aside.

The excuse that used to be given for the supply of inferior

books was that they would entice to the use of the better books. There was to be reached a mass of persons of inferior taste and imperfect education. These persons must be introduced gradually to an acquaintance with the better class of reading through the medium of the familiar. And, at all events, it was better that they should read something than not read at all.

I am not quite so confident of the regenerating virtue of mere printed matter as such; and I am confident that the reading of a book inferior in style and taste debases taste, and that the book which sets forth, even with power, a false view of society does harm to the reader, and is so far an injury to the community of which he is part. But even granting the premises, the conclusion is doubtful. We do not deliberately furnish poor art at public expense because there is a portion of the public which cannot appreciate the better. Nor when the best is offered, without apology, does the uncultured public in fact complain that it is too "advanced." Thousands of "ordinary" people come to see and enjoy the Abbey and Chavannes and Sargent decorations in the Boston Public Library. No one has yet complained that the paintings are too advanced for him. The best of art is not too good for the least of men, provided he can be influenced at all. Nor are the best of books too good for him, provided he can be influenced, and provided they are permitted, as are the pictures to make their appeal directly. They must not be secluded behind catalogs and formal paraphernalia. The practice which admitted the scholar to the shelves, and limited the general reader to the catalogues, gave the best opportunity to him who least needed it. The modern practice sets before the reader least familiar with good *titles* a selection of good *books*. It places them on open shelves where he can handle them without formality. The result is almost invariably, that he is attracted to a book in advance of his previous tastes. Perhaps a chance paragraph appeals to some experience or ambition, or an illustration stirs his imagination. The books themselves draw him outside of his previous limitations.

In the place, therefore, of books inferior in quality, the more modern public library seeks to attract by the freest possible access to books of the best quality. Not that this practice is universal. But the opinion and tendency are in this safe direction.

However, quality assumed, the general question as to the reading of recreative literature remains. What shall we say of



the fact that sixty per cent. of the circulation of the free public libraries still consists of fiction?

In the first place, that this percentage takes no account of reference use, which is almost wholly of serious literature; second, that as to home use the ratio in circulation of fiction to serious literature does not represent a similar ratio of trivial to serious service. Fiction is the small coin of literature. It must circulate more rapidly to represent the same volume of real business done. A volume of fiction may be issued, returned and re-issued three times while a biography or history or work of science is issued once. It will then count seventy-five per cent. in the circulation. But the serious book has during the entire period been out in the hands of the reader; and the service which it has performed—the period of attention which it has occupied—equals that of the novel in its three issues. And, finally, there is to be considered the influence of the best fiction toward general culture (if the library is not merely to inform but also to cultivate)—in broadening the sympathies, giving a larger tolerance, a kindlier humanity, a more intelligent helpfulness; in affording the rest that is in itself an equipment for work, and the distraction that may save from impulse to evil.

However, the amount of fiction circulated in proportion to the total work of the library is on the average steadily decreasing. At the same time the quality is improving; in part through critical selection, in part as a happy result of the fact that the inferior novels are also, as a rule, inferior books, so poorly manufactured that libraries cannot afford to buy them.

But there is standard fiction and current fiction; and it is the current fiction that constitutes by itself a special problem still perplexing. It is a problem that concerns not the uneducated child, nor the illiterate adult; it is caused by the people of intelligent education who are avid to read the latest novel by Mr X. or Mrs Y. while it is still the latest novel by Mr. X. or Mrs. Y. It is being talked about at dinner or afternoon tea. Well-informed people are reading it; to read it is a social necessity.

The reason that presses the public library to supply promptly every most recent book in the domain of scientific literature is apparent enough. Such literature contributes facts which are the data for action. But novels in general belong to the literature of power. Their purpose is not to furnish information but to give pleasure. Literature of this sort adds no new



fact, nor is it superseded, nor does it lose any of its value by lapse of time. To assume that it does would be to assume that beauty of form could become obsolete. This is not so in painting, in sculpture, in architecture; why should it be so in prose fiction, in poetry, in the drama? Was there, in fact, an aesthetic value in the *Canterbury Tales* in 1380, in *Hamlet* in 1602, in *Ivanhoe* in 1819, that is not to be found in them in 1898?

But a large portion of latter day fiction is fiction with a purpose; another way of saying that it is a work of art composed for the dissemination of doctrine. This element promotes it at once to the dignity of a treatise; a new view of politics, a new criticism of social conditions, a new creed! Here is something that concerns the student of sociology. And surely his needs are worthy of prompt response.

In fact, his needs and the general curiosity do get prompt response, and the new novels are freely bought. How freely I have recently sought to ascertain. I asked of some seventy libraries their yearly expenditure for current fiction in proportion to their total expenditure for books. The returns show an average of from ten to fifteen per cent. In one case the amount reached fifty per cent., in others it fell as low as two per cent. The ratio for fiction in general is much higher on the average; but fiction in general includes Scott and Thackeray and other standards, an ample supply of which would not usually be questioned. At Providence and Worcester, two of the most active and popular of public libraries, the purchases of fiction, current and standard, formed last year but seven and eleven per cent., respectively, of the entire expenditure for books.

At Boston there were selected but 178 titles of current fiction (out of nearly 600 read and considered). But some dozen copies were bought of each title, so that the entire purchases reached 2,300 volumes and cost about \$2,300. This was about six and a half per cent. on a total expenditure for books of \$34,000. At St. Louis the practise is to buy but two copies out of the general funds to be circulated free. Nearly a hundred more are added which are rented out and thus pay for themselves.

The statistics do not seem to show that the initial expenditure for current fiction is very alarming. But the purchase price of these books is but a fraction of the expense of handling them. They cannot be supplied in adequate quantities;

for while the frenzy of curiosity persists, an adequate supply is beyond the resources of any library. But since the attempt to supply is futile the pretense is injurious. The presence of the titles in the catalogues misleads the reader into a multitude of applications which are a heavy expense to the library without benefit to him. And the acquisition of the single book means to the library the expense of handling a hundred applications for it which are futile to one that can be honored. In this sense a current novel involves perhaps a hundred times the expense of any other book in being supplied to but the same number of readers.

The British museum acquires the new novels as published; but it withholds them from the readers until five years after their date of publication. It is my personal belief that a one year limitation of this sort adopted by our free libraries generally would relieve them of anxiety and expense and their readers of inconvenience and delusion.

But as regards current light literature in general it is worth while to consider whether the responsibility of public libraries has not been modified by the growth and diffusion of the newspaper and periodical press. In 1850, when the free public library was started, the number of newspapers and periodicals published in the United States was about 2,500; now it is nearly 20,000. The total annual issues have increased from 400 million to over 4½ billion copies.

The ordinary daily of 1850 contained perhaps a single column of literary matter. To-day it contains, for the same price, seven columns. In 1850 it gave no space to fiction; now it offers Kipling, Howells, Stockton, Bret Harte, Anthony Hope, Crockett, Bourget and many others of the best of the contemporary writers of fiction.

Then there are the cheap magazines, which tender a half dozen stories for the price of a cigar or a bodkin. There are, also, the cheap "libraries," which have flooded the United States with engaging literature available to almost any purse.

In short, conditions have altered. A vast mass of light literature is now cheaply accessible to the individual which formerly could be acquired only painfully or at great expense. Why then should the public libraries struggle to supply it in book form at the public expense?

But as to a certain percentage of current light literature

there is an embarrassment that I have not touched. It is the embarrassment of making selection without giving offense. All cannot be bought. A choice must be made. With reference to standard literature authoritative judgement is not difficult to obtain. But here there has been no lapse of time to balance opinion. An anticipatory estimate must be attempted and attempted by the library itself.

Now, if the library decide against the book it is very likely held to blame for "dictating" to its readers. "It is one thing," says a journal commenting on an adverse decision, "it is one thing to consider this novel pernicious, but it is another and more serious thing for the foremost library in the country maintained at public expense, to deny to a large and respectable portion of the public an opportunity to judge for itself whether the work of a man of (this author's) calibre is pernicious or not."

The author in this case was, of course, not Mr. X., but rather Mr. A., an already known quantity.

So a library is not to be permitted to apply a judgement of its own! It is not protected by the fact that this judgement coincides with the judgment of professional critics—so far at least as these may be ascertained. The author may have turned perverse and written a book distinctly bad. Yet this book is to be bought and supplied to enable each member of the public to form a judgment of his own upon it. And it is to be so bought out of public funds entrusted to the library for educational purposes. Censorship has to us an ugly sound; but does the library act as censor when it declares a book beyond its province? Does it dictate what the people shall read when it says, "We decline to buy this book for you with public funds"?

This is a question which is far larger than the selection or rejection of a novel or two. It involves the whole question of authority, and it concerns not merely the extremes, but the varying degrees of worth in literature. Most departments of educational work are founded upon principles, cautiously ascertained, and systematically adhered to. Their consistent maintenance upon principle is the easier because each other such department deals with a special constituency, limited either in age or perhaps in sex, or at least in purpose, and one which accepts as authoritative the system provided for it. The free

public library, however, has to satisfy a constituency practically unlimited, including every age of both sexes, whose intellectual need ranges from that of the most illiterate to that of the most highly accomplished, whose education in books ranges from that of the person who has never entered a library to that of the scholar whose life has been a perpetual training in the use of the library; the assertive classes, the bashful classes. And if toward this vast and heterogeneous constituency it seeks to assume the position of an educator, it finds that its authority is one which the constituents themselves are unanimously unwilling to concede. Each constituent deems himself not a beneficiary accepting some service, but a proprietor demanding it. Now, within each community there are persons who would have every kind of printed matter published. If, therefore, a public library exists simply to respond to the demands of its readers, we must have, instead of an educational system devised by experts and administered with reference to general principles, a system fluctuating with each eccentric requirement of individuals, indefinite in number, various in taste and culture, inexpert, except as each may be competent to judge his own need, incapable of expression in the aggregate, and as individuals without responsibility for the general results.

If, on the other hand, an authority is to be vested in the library, what limits shall it set upon itself, upon what principles of discrimination shall it proceed, in what directions may it expediently control? I but state the problem. I shall not endeavor to answer it. But it is one of the most important involved in the relation of the public library to the community.

From such questions an ordinary educational institution stands aloof. It is content to represent the judgment of the majority in matters of morality and to inculcate the lesson of tried truths as against untried fancies in matters of opinion affecting the social order. It thus throws its influence in favor of the established order of things. But its right, nay, its duty, to do this is unquestioned. Nor is it regarded as disparaging the opinion which it does not teach.

But a public library is not so exempt. In addition to the doctrine which is accepted, it is held to have a duty to the opinion which is struggling for recognition. As to minority opinion, it is not so much a university as a forum. Nay, it is to

give every advantage to minority opinion, for—in our resentment of intolerance—minority opinion is not merely tolerated, it is pampered.

Now, it is not for libraries or librarians to act as censors and denounce this or that publication. Yet it is to be remembered that a library which circulates a book helps to promulgate the doctrine which the book contains. And if public libraries circulate books which teach restless, irreverent or revolutionary doctrines, they offer us the incongruity of a municipality aiding in the propagation of ideas which are subversive of social order.

On the other hand, if there is to be exclusion on such grounds, where is the line of exclusion to be drawn? Shall we say at doctrines which, if carried into action, would be criminal under the law? Would the public rest content with this?

Moreover, the principle of exclusion accepted, who is to apply it? Whose judgment shall determine whether the particular book does or does not offend? Shall the library determine? But will it not then be "dictating" to its readers? Will it not be unduly discriminating against a certain class of opinion when it has undertaken to represent impartially all shades of opinion? Will it not offend the remonstrant against the existing order of things who has a grievance, and, therefore, a right to be heard; and the defender of the existing order of things who must know the opinion in order to combat it; and the student of sociology whose curiosity reaches all extremes and regards them simply as phenomena upon which he is entitled to be informed?

I believe that it will. And yet I do not see how the library can escape exercising judgment. For there is no other responsible authority which can be brought to exercise it. We must then expect numerous decisions which will offend a portion of the community. They will usually be on the conservative side—of exclusion. And it is for those who believe that a public library should be a conservative influence in the community to see that it has the authority and is protected in its exercise.

Not that in respect of the violent books there is great injury in present conditions. In the public libraries of to-day there exists no doubt material sufficiently anarchic to upset society, if it could have its will upon society. The fact is, that though



there is plenty in literature that is incendiary, there is little in our community that is inflammable.

The good that the libraries do is obvious and acknowledged. They represent the accumulated experience of mankind brought to our service. They are the custodians of whatever is most worthy of preservation in our own life and literature. They are the natural depositories of what we have of memorial and of records; the original entries of legislation and of achievement. They must render history available; they must adequately exhibit science; they may help to refine by the best examples in each art, and in this they may also contribute to the industrial life of the community by educating the artisan into an artist, his craft into an art. And through record and description of processes and inventions they may contribute to the foundations of great industries. They touch the community as a whole as perhaps does no other single organized agency for good. They offer to the shyest ignorance equality with the most confident scholarship, and demand no formal preliminary which might abash ignorance.

They have a profound duty—not generally appreciated—to help render homogeneous the very heterogeneous elements of our population. Thirty per cent. of it has come to us from an alien life and alien institutions. One-third of the people in our six leading cities are of foreign birth; seventy-one per cent. were either born abroad or born of foreign parentage. In the assimilation of this foreign element no single agency is perhaps so potent as our public libraries.

The public libraries deem themselves the allies of formal educational processes; but also the direct educators of that part of the community not subject to the formal processes. It is this latter responsibility which has led them to attempt a broader service than the mere supply of books. A book is not the only nor necessarily the most effective vehicle for conveying knowledge. There are illustrations which more directly convey an impression, and often as fully state a fact. And photographs and process reproductions are now part of the equipment of a public library almost as conventional as books. Within the past year 10,000 such have been added to the collections of the Boston Public Library; not as works of art (they are for the most part cheap silver prints and the Art Museum is but a hundred feet distant; nor merely as aids to the study



of the fine arts and the useful arts, but also as convenient auxiliaries to the study of history, of literature and institutions. And they are used by individuals and by classes not as a substitute for the text, but as helping to render vivid the lesson of the text.

With these go lectures in exposition. Every building of importance recently designed for the uses of a public library includes an art gallery and a lecture hall. What an immense augmentation of function this implies! It implies that the library is no longer merely an aggregate of books, each passive within rigid limits; but that it is an active agent having under its control material which is kept plastic and which it moulds into incredibly varied shapes to suit incredibly varied needs.

The experience of the Boston Public Library shows that in the case of books each increase of facilities creates an increased demand. The trustees of 1852 boasted that they were providing for as many as fifty readers at a time; the trustees of 1887 thought themselves venturesome in providing for 500 readers at a time; and within a month after the new building was opened it was forced to accommodate over 700 at a time. Every week over 30,000 persons enter the Central Library building, and every year 1,200,000 volumes are drawn for home use by the 65,000 card-holders. Yet these figures represent still but a portion of the persons reached and the work to be done. Nor can facilities for distribution keep pace with the need. For a city of a half million people spread over an area of forty square miles adequate library facilities cannot ever be provided. A municipality which even approximates the adequate in providing buildings, equipment, administration and general literature at the public expense must still look to private gift for the specialized material necessary to a great reference collection. That the Boston Public Library is next to the British Museum in Shakespeariana is, to be sure, the result of a special expenditure by the city. But the larger part of its special collections which have given it distinction as a great scholars' library, has come from private gift; the Ticknor collection of Spanish literature, the Bowditch collection of mathematics, the Chamberlain collection of autographs, the Brown collection of music and many others. And a city which erects for its public library a building which is monumental is putting forward the most attractive invitation to private gift. The gifts which have come to

Boston as the direct result of the new building have already reached a twelfth of its cost.

With proper organization and a liberal co-operation between municipal and private effort the opportunities for service are almost limitless. The risk is the greater of attempts at service either legally inappropriate or practically inexpedient, and the risk is not lessened by a popular appreciation which is more enthusiastic than it is apt to be discriminating. There is, therefore, the greater need of discrimination on the part of the library itself and of an authority which will protect its exercise. This authority can be conferred only by intelligent public opinion on the part of those who are capable of appreciating constitutional limitations.

## THE PUBLIC LIBRARY: ITS USES TO THE MUNICIPALITY

Written for the National Municipal League and printed in *The Library Journal* for June, 1903, eight years after the author, Dr. John S. Billings, had begun his service as director of the New York Public Library; largely a defence of libraries against certain objections. The statement of the part played by "sentiment" in popular institutions, and its justification, are striking and true.

John Shaw Billings was born in Switzerland County, Ind., in 1839, graduated from Miami University in 1857, studied medicine and after serving as a surgeon in the Civil War, was assigned to the Surgeon General's Office in Washington, of whose library he compiled the 16-volume Index Catalogue. After service in Johns Hopkins and Pennsylvania Universities he was chosen in 1895 director of the newly established New York Public Library, where he served until his death in 1913, planning and supervising the construction of its central building.

The great majority of cities of 25,000 inhabitants and upward in the United States have public libraries of some sort, and the same is true of many of the smaller cities. Many of these libraries have been founded on gifts of individuals, some have developed from subscription libraries, but the majority are now supported mainly or entirely by funds appropriated by the city government. A considerable number are still in the formative stage, this being true of those for which buildings are being erected from funds provided by Mr. Carnegie and for sev-

eral hundred others for which he will probably provide buildings in the near future.

There may be excessive and unjustifiable taxation for the support of a public library—the amount which the city can afford for this purpose should be carefully considered in connection with its needs for a pure water supply and good sewage disposal, for means of communication, for the care of the sick poor and for public schools. Each case must be judged by itself; the only general rule I have to suggest is that in the department of education the claims of the public library for support are more important than those of municipal college or high school. The people who have no taxable property, and who therefore often erroneously suppose that they contribute nothing toward the payment of the taxes, are usually quite willing to have a higher tax rate imposed for the purpose of securing for themselves and their families free library facilities—although in exceptional cases religious or sociological opinions may lead them to oppose it.

A considerable number of taxpayers on the other hand, are more or less reluctant to have their assessments increased for this purpose, and their arguments should be considered and met. They are:

1. That they should not be taxed for things they do not want and never use.
2. That furnishing free books tends to pauperize the community and to discourage the purchase of books for home use.
3. That there is no evidence that free public libraries improve the community materially or morally.
4. That the greater part of the books used are works of fiction and that these are injurious to the readers.
5. That most of the arguments used in favor of free public libraries are merely sentimental and emotional.

The first of these reasons would apply also to taxes for public schools, street paving, sewerage, and many other items of municipal expenditure and has no weight.

With regard to the second argument it is not a sufficient reply to say that every one pays through the taxes, for this would apply equally well to free lodging houses, free lunch-rooms and soup kitchens, free fuel, etc., all of which it generally believed tend to pauperize a city, except in great and

special emergencies. The proper answer is that the free public library is an important and, indeed, necessary part of the system of free education which is required to secure intelligent citizens in our form of popular government, and that while in a few very exceptional cases free schools and free libraries may tend to improvidence or indolence or even to certain forms of crime, these rare cases are of no importance in comparison with the benefits which education confers upon the immense majority of the community and with the fact that without free schools and libraries a large part of the people will not be sufficiently educated to be useful citizens.

With the regard to the third count, the public library, again, may be considered together with the public school. While it is difficult to trace to either specific instances of material or moral improvement, it is certain that the general diffusion of intelligence which both certainly effect does result beneficially in these directions. Communities with flourishing free schools and libraries are usually more prosperous and better than those without such facilities, and, while there is doubtless room here for a confusion of cause and effect, it is probable that there is both action and reaction. Prosperity calls for increased facilities for education and these in turn tend to make the community more prosperous.

That the majority of books withdrawn from public libraries are works of fiction cannot be denied. Many librarians are wont to deplore this fact, and most libraries endeavor in one way or another to decrease the percentage of fiction in their circulation.

The proportion of recreative reading in a public library is necessarily large. In like manner, the greater proportion of those who visit a zoological or botanical garden do so for amusement. Yet the information that they secure in so doing is none the less valuable and both are certainly educational institutions. So if in the public library a large number of its users get their history, their travel and their biography through the medium of recreative readings we should not complain. Were it otherwise these readers would probably lack altogether the information that they now certainly acquire.

Taking up the final count in the indictment, it is doubtless true that sentimental and emotional considerations have had much to do with library development. They have furnished the

initial motive power, as they have for free schools, for the origin and progress of democratic government, and for most of the advances of civilization. They often precede deliberate, conscious reasoning and judgment, yet they are often themselves the result of an unconscious reasoning process producing action of the will in advance of deliberate judgment. Sometimes they are pure reflexes, like winking when the eye is threatened by a blow. The free public library can neither be established nor maintained usefully without their aid, but their methods—or want of method—must be carefully guided to produce good results.

The sentiment that we ought to establish institutions for the diffusion of knowledge is the expression of a real economic need and should be directed and encouraged and not suppressed. Logic is a useful steering apparatus, but a very poor motive power.



## THE LIBRARY: A PLEA FOR ITS RECOGNITION

Delivered by Frederick M. Crunden before the Library Section of the International Congress of Arts and Science, held in connection with the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904, closes with a summary of the public library's functions that remains measurably true to-day, although, of course, it could now be somewhat expanded.

A sketch of Mr. Crunden appears in Vol. I.

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition is an epitome of the life and activity of the world—from the naked Negrito to the grande dame with her elaborate Paris costume, from the rude wigwam of the red Indian to the World's Fair palace filled with the finest furniture, rugs and tapestries, sculpture and painting, and decorations that the highest taste and finest technique can produce—from the monotonous din of the savage tom-tom to the uplifting and enthralling strains of a great symphony orchestra—from fire by friction, the first step of man beyond the beast, to the grand electric illumination that makes of these grounds and buildings the most beautiful art-created spectacle that ever met the human eye. And to all this magnificent appeal to the senses are superadded the marvels of modern science and its applications—the wonders of the telescope, the microscope and the spectroscope, the telegraph, in its latest wireless extension, the electric motor and electric light, the telephone and the phonograph, the Roentgen ray and the new-found radium.

And now after this vision of wondrous beauty, this triumph of the grand arts of architecture and sculpture and landscape—of all the arts, fine and useful—has for six months enraptured the senses of people from all quarters of the globe, the learned men of the world have gathered here to set forth and discuss the fundamental principals that underlie the sciences, their

correlations and the methods of their application to the arts of life—to summarize the progress of the past, to discuss the condition of the present and attempt, perhaps, a forecast of the future.

In the scheme of classification, our subject appears in the last department that concerns itself with man's purely mundane affairs, and is the last section in that department. It thus appears properly as a climax and summary of the arts and sciences intelligible to man in his present stage of existence; and if the problem of the future life is ever solved this side of the grave, the knowledge conserved and disseminated by the library will be the starting-point and the inspiration of the advance, as it has been of all progress since the art of written speech was invented. "The library is the reservoir of the common social life of the race. It is at once the accumulator and the transmitter of social energy." Without the library the highest social culture is impossible; and a most moderate degree could be achieved by very few.

Under the main division, "Social Culture," the library is one of the five sections in the Department of Education. In education are summed up all the achievements of the past and the possibilities of the future. In the words of Wendell Phillips, "Education is the one thing worthy the deep, controlling anxiety of the thoughtful man." "Education," exclaims Mazzini, "and my whole doctrine is included and summed up in this grand word." It is practically a truism that Jules Simon utters when he says "*Le peuple qui a les meilleures écoles est le premier peuple; s'il ne l'est pas aujourd'hui il le sera demain.*"

Under this Department of Education, with its grades, the School, the College and the University, the Library is assigned the last section. It belongs there in chronological order of development as an active factor in popular instruction and enlightenment; and, furthermore, the presentation of its claims and functions comes naturally after those of the other factors in education, because it is an essential coadjutor and supplement to each and all. It is a summary and a climax. There have always been libraries, and they have always been a factor in education; but the public, free, tax-supported library is but just half a century old, and could hardly be considered out of the long clothes of infancy till the year 1876; while its general acceptance as an essential supplement to the public school and a

co-ordinate factor with the college and university may be considered the accomplishment of the last decade. There are still teachers who look on general reading as an interference with school work and an extra burden on their shoulders.

We start, then, with the axiomatic proposition that all human progress depends on education; and no elaborate demonstration is necessary to show that the library is an essential factor in every grade of education.

Higher education, certainly, cannot dispense with the library. The well-known dictum of Carlyle, "The true university of modern times is a collection of books," was accepted as a striking statement of a man with rhetorical habit, without, perhaps, a realization of its full significance. It has been recently expanded into a more express and specific tribute to the importance of the library in university education. In an address delivered in St. Louis and afterwards published in the *North American Review*, President Harper said:

"The place occupied by libraries and laboratories in the educational work of to-day, as compared with that of the past, is one of commanding importance. Indeed, the library and the laboratory have already practically revolutionized the methods of higher education. In the really modern institution, the chief building is the library. It is the center of institutional activity. . . . That factor of college work, the library, fifty years ago almost unknown, to-day already the center of the institution's intellectual activity, half a century hence, with its sister, the laboratory, almost equally unknown fifty years ago, will have absorbed all else and will have become the institution itself."

As to the value of the library in elementary education Doctor Harris says:

"What there is good in our American system points towards the preparation of the pupil for the independent study of the book by himself. It points towards acquiring the ability of self-education by means of the library."

I might quote similar utterances from many other eminent educators as to the value—the necessity—of the library in early education; but I can think of no stronger summing-up of the subject, nor from higher authority, than this statement from President Eliot:

"From the total training during childhood there should result in the child a taste for interesting and improving reading,

which should direct and inspire its subsequent intellectual life. That schooling which results in this taste for good reading, however unsystematic or eccentric the schooling may have been, has achieved a main end of elementary education; and that schooling which does not result in implanting this permanent taste has failed. . . . The uplifting of the democratic masses depends on this implanting at school of the taste for good reading."

To persons who have given little thought to educational questions these utterances will have the weight that attaches to the highest authority; but we need no university president or national commissioner to tell us these facts. We have learned them from our own experience; and, enlightened as we now are, it seems to us strange that question could ever have been raised as to the essential character of the library in elementary education. Yet there are some of us, I am sure, who can recall painful consequences from putting into practice an educational theory not generally accepted by the pedagogues of our childhood days.

We know that higher education is impossible without a library, for the library is the storehouse of the world's knowledge, the record of humanity's achievements, the history of mankind's trials and sorrows and sufferings, of its victories and defeats and of its gradual progress upwards in spite of frequent fluctuation and failure. In this chronicle of the past lie lessons for the present and the future; from the lives of storied heroes comes the inspiration that leads the race onward and upward. A university without a library would of necessity have a very small and weak faculty—only the few professors who could be induced to go where the most important instrumentality of their work was lacking: the university that has an adequate library includes in its faculty the professors of all other universities and all the great teachers of all countries and ages.

But is it worth while to consider a university without a library? Can there be such an institution?

In higher education, then, the library is a necessity. In elementary and secondary education it is no less essential, if the most is to be made of the few years that the average child spends in school and if he is to be started on a path of self-culture. On this point Stanley Jevons says:

"In omitting that small expenditure in a universal system of libraries which would enable young men and women to keep up the three R's and continue their education, we spend £97 and stingily decline the £3 really needed to make the rest of the £100 effective."

At the International Library Conference in London, in 1897, one of the most distinguished American librarians, who has been an administrator in a large educational field outside of the library, expressed his view of the supreme importance of the library in a scheme of popular education by saying that if he had to choose between the public school and the public library—if he could have only one—(though the alternative is one that never will or can be presented), he would keep the library and let the school go. For, he argued, every child would learn to read somehow; and, with a free library that actively sought him, he would be better off than if he had a school to teach him to read, but no books to read after he had learned. But however divergent might be opinions regarding this impossible alternative, there is no doubt that the public library, with enlarged functions and activities, has at least equal potentialities with the school. Whether the formal instruction of the school or the broader education of the library is of greater value, depends on what is the chief aim. If it is merely to make bread-winners, the school may be the more useful, though in this, too, the library is an efficient coadjutor; but if our purpose is to make men and women, citizens of a progressive nation, active members of an aspiring society, the library may fairly claim at least equal rank with the school. For the school wields its direct influence over the average child but a few years; the library is an active influence through life.

Again, more than ninety-five children out of every hundred leave school before they are sufficiently mature to comprehend those studies which open their eyes to the universe, which bear upon their relations to their fellow-men, upon their duties as citizens of a state, as members of organized society. These are the studies that deal with the most important problems that mankind has to solve. They cannot be taught to children; they cannot be taught—dogmatically—at all. They involve the consideration of burning questions, subjects of bitter controversy—the world-old battle between conservatism and innovation which, as Emerson says, "is the subject of civil history."

They cannot be taught by any teacher, they cannot be taught by any text-book or by any one book. Their adequate consideration calls for the reading of many books—books of the present and the future as well as the past. The electrician who allows himself to be guided by the treatises of twenty years ago would have no standing; neither has the economist or sociologist who has not kept up with the literature of the last thirty years—or the last three years. It would be of no particular advantage for all of us to be electricians. We can safely trust that field to experts; but it is extremely desirable that every man should comprehend the great issues of economics and politics. The school cannot even PRESENT the important problems of sociology; the university cannot adequately do so without the library. On no other subject is the wide reading that Matthew Arnold enjoins so necessary. And no other subject is of such momentous importance to mankind; for the betterment of social conditions is a necessary forerunner and foundation of moral and religious progress. And that cannot be true religion which does not lead to social betterment. In that noblest aspiration ever put into the mouth and mind and heart (too often, alas, only the mouth!) of man we are taught to pray not that we may be transplanted to a better world, but that God's kingdom may come and His will be done in this world.

We are not likely to abate our eagerness in the pursuit of knowledge of physical science, for the zeal of the scientist is stimulated by the spur of commercialism; and, though it seems impossible, the twentieth century may bring forth as wonderful discoveries and inventions as the nineteenth. But, to take the advance just now most sought, can any one raise the question as to which would be of greater benefit to St. Louis, to reach Chicago in an hour by airship or to take six or ten hours for the trip and find there—and everywhere—a contented body of workmen supplying us with the necessities of life and a set of managers carrying on the transportation system that we already have on equal terms to all people? What the world's progress most needs is "evening up." The advancing column presents a very ragged front, with physical science and its applications so far ahead that they have almost lost sight of social science in the rear. It would be no great disadvantage to the world—to the progress of mankind as a whole—if the swift-footed legion of applied science would merely mark time for



a period, while attention should be given to a better organization of the vast human army. The objective point would be reached as soon, for a nation is like a railway train; it can go no faster than its hindmost car. But this is not likely to happen at present. Applied science has every stimulus from within and without, every reward intrinsic and extrinsic; while progress in the social and political sciences must carry the dead weight of the inertia of conservatism and also meet the active and intense opposition of vested interests, which have ever the single purpose of preserving the status quo, no matter how unjust or maleficent.

The solution of these all-important problems cannot be found in the school, where immature minds are taught merely how to use the tools of knowledge; these questions cannot be settled by the small number of university students; they must be solved by the education of the masses, by instilling in them in their early school years a desire for knowledge and a love for good reading, which will lead them to continue their education by means of the library. The education of the mass of the voters who determine the character of a democratic government, must not be left to the party organ or the stump speaker. The great social and political questions should be studied and pondered in the quiet of the closet and not decided, without previous thought, amid the hurrahs of the hustings.

To make the public library realize fully its possibilities as the People's University calls for more than the opportunity which every public library now offers; it requires active effort to reach out and bring the people to the library by the fullest co-operation with the school and by means of attractive lecture courses, which shall stimulate reading and guide it in profitable channels. But the beginning of this work—the inculcation of a taste for good reading—lies with the school, with the library's co-operation, especially during the years from six to ten or twelve, those years when nearly all the children come under the school's influence and when the habit of reading can be most easily formed.

If charged with placing undue stress upon the value of the library, I might urge its comparative newness and its consequent lack of recognition; and, as an evidence of the latter, I might point to the fact that in this great educational exposition, while one vast palace is given up to exhibits of the school,

the library has with difficulty secured a part of a room in the Missouri State Building for an exhibit of its activities in the great work of education, in which, as I am trying to show, its potentialities are as great as those of the school. As our Board of Directors said, in its appeal to the exposition Directors for a separate library building:

"The library, besides being the most efficient and most economical agency for popular education, represents all the fair will have to show. It stands for the sum total of human knowledge. It is the instrumentality through which knowledge has been conserved and cumulated. Only through the library can civilization continue to advance. . . . Books are the most potent factors in progress. Without books we should have had no powerful locomotives to show, no wireless telegraphy, no wonder-making machinery, no beautiful buildings, no impressive statuary, no paintings to arouse wonder and yield delight—no World's Fair to draw distinguished scientists and educators from all over the world."

By way of introduction to the comprehensive addresses of the two distinguished delegates who have travelled four or five thousand miles to lay before this Section, and, through publication, before the world, the past history and the present problems of the library, it has seemed to me appropriate that, as chairman, I should present a brief plea for the consideration of the library as one of the greatest factors in human progress. It has existed, though not in its present form or with its present functions, from the dawn of recorded civilization. It is itself the record of civilization; and without it there can be no records and no civilization. It is the repository, the custodian, the preserver of all the arts and sciences and the principal means of disseminating all knowledge. With the school and the church it forms the tripod necessary to the stable equilibrium of society. Let me briefly summarize the functions of the public library.

1. It doubles the value of the public school instruction, on which is expended more than ten times the cost of the library.
2. It enables the children who leave school at an early age (an overwhelming majority) to continue their education while earning their living. It provides for the education of the adults who have lacked or failed to utilize early opportunities. This is of special importance in a country like the United States, where one of the greatest political problems is the as-

simulation of a vast influx of ignorant foreigners of all races and languages.

3. It supplies books and periodicals needed for the instruction of artisans, mechanics, manufacturers, engineers, and all others whose work requires technical knowledge<sup>1</sup>—all persons on whom depends the industrial progress of the community.

4. It furnishes information and inspiration to ministers, teachers, journalists, authors, physicians, legislators—all persons on whose work depend the intellectual, moral, sanitary, political and religious welfare and advancement of the people.

5. It is the stimulus and the reliance of the literary and study clubs, which, especially among the women, have done much not only for individual self-culture but also for civic enlightenment and social betterment. This represents its numerous post-graduate courses, which are taken by constantly increasing numbers.

6. It has philosophers and theologians to explain and expound and to exhort those who are willing to listen; but, far better, it has poets and dramatists and novelists—who compel a hearing and impress on heart as well as mind the fundamental truths of morality and religion.

7. It is also a school of manners, which have been well defined as minor morals. The child learns by example and by the silent influence of his surroundings; and every visit to a library is a lesson in propriety and refinement. The roughest boy or the rudest man cannot fail to be impressed by the library atmosphere and by that courtesy which is the chief element in the "library spirit."

8. It imparts, as the school cannot, knowledge of one's self, and of one's relations to one's fellow-man, and thus prepares the individual for citizenship and fellowship in organized society and leads him to be an active force in social advancement.

9. It elevates the standard of general intelligence throughout the community, on which depends its material prosperity as well as its moral and political well-being.

10. But not last, if an exhaustive list were aimed at—nor least it supplies a universal and urgent craving of human nature

<sup>1</sup> The information furnished by a book in the Cincinnati Public Library once saved that city a quarter of a million dollars. This in numerous instances, but on a smaller scale, is a part of the everyday work of the library.

by affording to all entertainment of the highest and purest character, substituting this for the coarse, debasing, demoralizing, amusements which would otherwise be sought and found. Further, it brings relief and strength to many a suffering body and cheer and solace to many a sorrowing heart. It is instruction and inspiration to the young, comfort and consolation to the old, recreation and companionship to all ages and conditions.

I close as I began :

Education is the greatest concern of mankind; it is the foundation of all human progress. The library is an essential factor in all grades of education; and it is the agent plenipotentary in the betterment of society and the culture and cheer of the human soul. "The highest gift of education is not the mastery of sciences, but noble living, generous character, the spiritual delight that comes from familiarity with the loftiest ideals of the human mind, the spiritual power that saves each generation from the intoxication of its own success."

## THE LIBRARY AS A FACTOR IN MODERN CIVILIZATION

Read by President Faunce of Brown University, at the Narragansett Pier Conference of the American Library Association in 1906. Elaborates the library's three gifts to the nation—"knowledge, perspective and ideals."

William Herbert Perry Faunce was born in Worcester, Mass., Jan. 15, 1859, graduated at Brown University in 1880, entered the Baptist ministry, and after holding several pastorates became in 1899 president of his alma mater. He is known as an effective writer and speaker, especially on religion and education.

We have long been accustomed to speak of three great factors in modern civilization—the school, the church, and the home. Must we, in view of such a significant meeting as this, add a fourth factor—the library? The modern library has in some places become a true school; in other places it has radiated something of the refinement for which we once looked to the home, and something of the idealism which is a peculiar gift of the church. The library is vastly more than a collection of books: it is a social, civilizing, moralizing force. We expect to find the library building in every city and town as much as to find the spire of the church or the flag of the schoolhouse. The visitor to Boston to-day finds the public library as commanding a pile as Trinity Church, and far more imposing than any schoolhouse. The visitor to New York finds the new public library building climbing into a mass and dignity as great as that of any cathedral. No smallest village is now complete without its library, and when some future Goldsmith shall sing the praise of another "Deserted village," he will point out not only with the "noisy mansion" of the school-master, not only the church adorned with the meek and unaffected grace of the rural pastor, but the loaded shelves, the catalogs and reference

lists, the chairs and tables, and the zeal unaffected, though not always meek, of the modern librarian.

These libraries have sprung into being throughout the land without specific legislation and without deliberate propaganda. The church missionary societies of the country have adopted the avowed policy of planting a church in every community, and appointing superintendents of missions to see that this is done. Every state in the Union has its laws for the establishment and maintenance of schools. But these multiplying libraries have come into being without enactment of law or the preaching of the crusade. They have spread from sea to sea by a happy contagion, they have become a noble American epidemic. The great inarticulate thirst for knowledge has demanded satisfaction, and created its own supply. Our wisest directors of public sentiment and philanthropic endeavor have realized that through the library may come a charity that does not pauperize, a help that induces self-help, light to irradiate the dark places of civilization, inspiration for every calling, and access and power to every worthy institution and noble cause. What then is the specific function of this new and powerful institution in modern life? What is the contribution of the library to modern civilization?

The library makes to the nation three gifts: the gift of knowledge, the gift of perspective, the gift of ideals. Putting the matter in another way, we may say it gives us facts, relations, values.

The library is primarily to conserve and disseminate knowledge. Indeed, the old conception of the library was purely that of a place of storage for written or printed material. No one thought of taking out a book from a mediaeval library any more than of removing a statue or painting from an art gallery. And still to-day the function of the library as a storehouse is most important. Modern democracy holds that knowledge is not for a few bright minds of each generation, not for an intellectual elite; but all that is knowable is to be made accessible to all that desire to know. If we allow knowledge to come only to a chosen few of each generation, how can we know that we have chosen the right ones to receive it? The genius that might turn the stream of history may be born in the lowliest cabin on the prairie, or in the darkest tenement of the great city. There may not be a village Hampden in every village, but there may be



an Edison, a Fulton, an Eli Whitney, an Andrew Carnegie, a Carl Schurz in any village in America. Only when we make knowledge accessible to all shall we know what minds and hearts are among us.

But we must discriminate. The books which no longer convey knowledge, which state theories no longer held, and propound as facts things no longer believed; in other words, antiquated books of knowledge should be sharply separated from books abreast of modern thinking. Those books which have ceased to be of any use to mankind (except for antiquarian purposes) or which never were of any use to mankind—and their name is legion—have their place in a museum, but not in an working library. In an arsenal we keep only weapons now serviceable in actual war, and relegate flint-locks, catapults, and bows and arrows to the museum. No arsenal in the world would be large enough to accommodate weapons for a modern regiment mingled with all the weapons of all past generations. It is time for some one to say frankly that there is no inherent sanctity in paper and printer's ink. It may have been true in Milton's day that a book was usually the precious life-blood of a master spirit; but to-day a book is often the product of the least erected spirit that fell. An almanac put forth to advertise some nostrum, or a novel prepared purely as a piece of merchandise, does not acquire dignity or value simply because bound in leather and placed on the shelf with "Paradise Lost."

We must apply to our libraries some higher standard than that of size. We never estimate the Uffizzi or the Louvre by the number of paintings they contain, yet we continue to grade modern libraries by the number of volumes groaning on dust-covered shelves. A library of five thousand well selected books may be of far more service than one of one hundred thousand composed largely of books outgrown and forgotten. Our public libraries must distinguish sharply between the library and the museum, to the advantage of both.

Secondly: Perspective. The library aims to show us facts in their large and permanent relations. There is no virtue in mere knowledge of facts (any more than in vast numbers of volumes). Most facts are not worth knowing, still less worth preserving. Doubtless the letter "p" occurs a certain definite number of times in "Idylls of the King," and it may be that some deluded mortal in prison or asylum has ascertained that

number; but we do not care to know that fact or have any one else know it. The exact number of grains in some ant-hill is doubtless discoverable, but only a lunatic would care for the discovery. Most facts in nature and in history are in our present stage of development without value. Only when these facts are collected, classified, seen in relation, and translated into truth do they become of value to men.

For this reason the library must encourage, slow, patient, thoughtful reading. We have long been told that a taste for reading is worth ten thousand a year. Whether this is true or not depends altogether on what sort of reading is referred to. The habit of letting the mind lie passive while some scribbler plays upon it is not worth ten thousand a year. The habit of letting the mind become a waste basket for sensation and scandal is not worth ten thousand a year. The habit of reading as a substitute for thinking is worth nothing, but is sheer damage to mental fibre. The university library is even more important than the university laboratory. In the laboratory we verify the theory which is far more likely to be discovered in the library. The new discovery is a new combination of old ideas, and such mental combination comes to us more easily when we are dealing with thoughts than with things.

Our students need to use books not only as tools, but as friends. In the old days, when the reading of college students was far more promiscuous than to-day, they were accustomed to regard books almost as personal acquaintances, and there was a genuine exchange of reaction of writer and reader. Such reading was indeed very desultory, but, as our professor of English literature is accustomed to say, "it was immensely fattening." Now, on the other hand, the college student goes to the library with a list of references, using many books, but becoming really acquainted with none. He opens one work at volume 2, page 193, another at volume 4, page 315, and, having extracted the precise bit of information he desires, has no further use for the author in question. This modern method of reading is far more accurate and definite than the older method, and is obviously effective in securing results. But it must be supplemented by the "browsing" of former days, by the large horizons which come from being set free in the companionship of great minds.

Thirdly: Ideals. Our libraries must not be only storehouses

of knowledge, but reservoirs of power. The great books of all time give us contact with inspiring personalities, shining examples, with the great leaders of men. The trophies of Themistocles will not suffer us to sleep. When such books come into many a shut-in life, to many a boyhood, cabined and confined, the limitations of the farm and factory are forgotten, the mind expands to a kinship with past and future, and the reader in some village library may become the prophet of the new century, and the leader of the modern world.

More than that: the literature of power creates the climate in which we live. It shapes our ideals of success, of power, of beauty, of goodness. Fiction and poetry, if they thus create aspiration and give us standards, may be more useful than all encyclopedias or text-books, for they deal with the sources and the goal of all human action.



## THE PROVISION OF BOOKS

The seven addresses or papers just preceding relate to the general services of the library to the community. The twelve that now follow analyze this into four types of special service, as already suggested—the provision of books, the collection of information, the control and guidance of reading and community-centre service. The next three papers treat of the provision of books.





## THE LIBRARIAN AND HIS CONSTITUENTS

That the choice of books is the most important of the librarian's duties and that "his best effort" should be given to it, is the thought of an institutional librarian, R. B. Poole of the New York Y. M. C. A. This view should interest those who think that administrative problems and socialization are elbowing the books into the background.

Reuben Brooks Poole was born in Rockport, Mass., in 1834, and graduated at Brown University in 1857. After serving as a teacher he became librarian of the Y. M. C. A. library in New York City, where he remained until his death on April 6, 1895. He was president of his state library association in 1894.

By constituents is not meant political constituents. It is unfortunate for any librarian when he holds his office in a public library as a political favor, and library appointments should be as far removed as possible from all party influences. A public library, like any other public property, is susceptible of being used as a tool, and may easily degenerate into a political job, unless specially protected by its charter. New York city has one such library. The library exists for the librarians; its constituents—not readers—are of the school of politics. The example, it is to be hoped, is a unique one in our country.

A brief retrospect of the libraries and librarians of the past may help us to more fully comprehend the situation of the librarian and his constituents of to-day.

The monk represented the librarian of the Middle Ages. He was not by profession a librarian, and yet the valuable service he rendered to literature entitles him to the name. He was at once chorister, master of ceremonies, transcriber, illuminator, and collector. Professedly the monk was a religious

ascetic. He retired from the world to devote himself to religion, to a life of self-denial. His language was the Latin; the books or manuscripts that surrounded him were works of the Fathers, books of devotion, service-books, and the classics. These were just in keeping with his life and thoughts. A congenial occupation was thus opened to him. The hours of the cloister were made shorter as the monk duplicated and reduplicated some dainty missal, or some commentary of Augustine, or painted a miniature of the Virgin or of the apostles.

However much we may differ in opinion as to the service rendered to religion by the monasteries of the Middle Ages, as librarians we have a fellow-feeling with these toiling monks, and are grateful to them for the service they have rendered the libraries of to-day by their preservation of works that otherwise would have been destroyed. There is nothing in the book-making arts of to-day to compare with the artistic skill displayed in the illuminations and miniature-painting which enrich and beautify the manuscripts of those times.

The monastic libraries were small, and the readers few. Books were loaned from monastery to monastery. They were distributed once a year, at the Lenten season. As each borrower returned his book he was catechised as to its contents. if the examination was satisfactory he was allowed another book for the coming year; if not, he must take his old book again.

One not a member of the order of St. Benedict, or an *attaché* of Cluny or Canterbury, could procure the coveted treasure, sometimes, by pledging to return with the manuscript borrowed a full transcription.

Library economy in these ages was very simple. Catalogues were little more than inventories, and no discordant notes were chanted, in duets or solos, over systems of classification. The absolute or fixed system of shelving was in vogue, the books being held in their places by chains. The survival of this feature exists in the attachments of the modern city directory.

But, not to linger longer in cloisters or abbeys, we come to the age of printing and to the foundation of the modern libraries of Europe; the treasures in the monastic libraries contributing to form their vast collections.

The monk's occupation as a librarian was gone, and he was succeeded by the collector, the keeper, the scholar. In the

centuries immediately succeeding the invention of printing there was a growing diffusion of knowledge by means of libraries. We smile at the restrictions imposed, and look upon them as so many fetters on the intellect. It is, however, to be borne in mind that at this time books were costly and rare, and on this account were guarded with great jealousy.

When the Bodleian library was founded it was stipulated by law that under no pretence should any book be lent to any one, no matter what his station. A Fellow of Corpus Christi College could not enter the sacred alcoves alone, and he was under oath not to remove a book. The books were there for use, there can be no question; and in the Bodleian, to which we have just referred, a person could have six books at a time to consult, and the library was open for six hours during the day.

About 1650 Humphrey Chetham bequeathed £1,000 for a public library in Manchester, England. He was a firm adherent of the fixed location. "My mind and will is," he says, "that care be taken that none of said books be taken out of the said library at any time, and that the said books be fixed or chained." After specifying certain religious books, and annotations on the Bible, he adds, "and other books proper for the common people." It was two hundred years after this, in this last half century, before the Public Libraries Act was introduced into the English Parliament; and from this period we may date a new era, both in England and in this country, in the dissemination of books and improved library methods. The last decade, commencing with the formation of the A.L.A. and the beginning of our second century as a nation, has witnessed results hitherto unachieved in library economy. It is not necessary to enlarge here upon the work that has been accomplished. The important thing to note is that the librarian of to-day should be *en rapport* with all that pertains to his profession. He should acquaint himself with schemes of classification, and elect from them that which is best adapted for the purposes of his own library. He should adopt the best system for charging, acquaint himself with the most approved library appliances. Whether he adopt the classed catalogue, the dictionary, the alphabeto-classed, or any other form, let it be one that shall be abreast of the progress that has been made in this department of library science. The librarian can scarcely keep pace with his fellow-librarians unless he receives the right hand of fellowship of the American Lib-

rary Association, and is a reader of the *Library journal* or the *Library notes*, just launched and designed to cruise along the coast into the smaller ports. The advantages which the librarian receives from these sources will qualify him better for his profession, but the greater advantage will accrue to his readers: knowledge will be made more available, and a bright, cheerful atmosphere will pervade the alcoves of his store-house.

The librarian of to-day is developing to the full the utilitarian principle. He is practical,—practical in his library management, practical in his choice of books. His constituency is either a particular class or the great public. To supply the masses with reading, and to make books helpful in all the vocations of life, is the librarian's aim. It is just here that we need to emulate our predecessors, the monks and the collectors and bookworms of the sixteenth and succeeding centuries.

He must have the spirit of the collector, the animus of the scholar. He must not forget that he is an antiquarian in his zeal for utility. His constituency is not confined to the present; he is building for posterity as well. His library will live after him. He therefore needs to be a wise master-builder.

If the choice of books is in the librarian's hands, or if he occupies an important position in connection with the selection, his best effort should be given to this department. The responsibility is not small. He will find it more difficult often to reject than to select. He must consult the wants of his readers; but there is a limit to that. Everything that is in print may be called for, but that is no reason why it should be honored with a place in a library. The librarian's personal equation is not to be the standard, but the foundation principles of morality, truth, and sound sense must guide him. No quarter should be given to books of doubtful morality. Fiction now finds a place in most libraries open to any extent to the public, and this class of books forms so large a part of the circulation of many libraries that it is becoming a question of no small importance as to how far public funds should be expended for such books as afford little else than pastime. A public library is a public educator. It is not a sluice into which every publisher may dump his entire wares; as educators, librarians and managing boards have the right to maintain the purity of their collections, and to protect them from inundations of worthless books.

The librarian should be alert to supply his readers with all

they require that will be helpful, as we have said; but, more than this, he should lead them. He may do so by procuring works of standard worth, new and old, that represent the best thought in any department of literature or science.

Unless he has something of the spirit of the collector very much will elude his grasp, and be, perhaps, utterly lost to his library. There are the limited editions, now so limited in number; the privately printed book; the first numbers of periodicals; the first reports of societies; local histories and genealogies; memorial volumes, and the like,—works whose value is enhanced by time.

A librarian, to be successful, must be a lover of books. The novice, in applying for a librarianship, often puts it down as one of his cardinal qualifications that he is fond of reading. To the active, toiling worker this is not suggestive of business. A love of books very naturally suggests a taste for reading, except when bibliomania is in the blood. A true friend of books is not such because his collection embraces Elzevirs and Aldines, or because they are in Grolier or Bedford bindings, or printed on Whatman or Holland paper,—these are matters of just pride,—but because the army of silent authors, marshalled under his leadership, will diffuse light and knowledge wherever they go. The librarian imbued with this spirit, if he finds time to read, will reflect what he has read. It is to be feared that the librarian who reads in these times is the exception; and yet there can be no question that, if he could have each day an hour or two for reading,—time enough to acquaint himself with the thought of the times, and occasionally commune with the authors of the past,—his efficiency would be greatly enlarged, and his readers would have a supplemental catalogue in him, corresponding, to some extent, to the good work contemplated by our Cooperative Committee.

There are in every library very many books that are what we might term, to use a mercantile phrase, dead stock. From the very necessities of the case there must be many books that will be called for only at great intervals, while others never have a friendly consultation. But, aside from these, libraries will often have works of great practical value that are standing idle, because it is not generally known that the library possesses them. There may be a choice lot of works on electricity, a rare collection on ceramics, a fine selection of engravings,



representative works in the various industrial arts; the call for them not being popular and large, they might be brought to the notice of a larger constituency by calling the attention of certain readers to them, or by sending a polite invitation to some manufacturing firms, to some professional electricians, or to art schools and scientific schools.

Periodicals, before the days of Poole's Index, were sealed books. Libraries have been wonderfully expanded where this index is used. Further cooperation in this direction, as planned by the Cooperative Committee, should receive hearty encouragement. The books of a library may be further enlarged in their use by publishing, on the library bulletin, the works in the library that illustrate important events, after the admirable plan initiated by Mr. Foster, of Providence.

If the librarian has not the time at his command to read he has rare opportunities for reading character; and to be on good terms with his varied constituency he will have to be like St. Paul,—all things to all men. He must be polite, accommodating, possess his soul in patience, and be unselfish in his devotion to his readers. Generally, his contact with his constituency will be pleasant and agreeable, but he will have to deal with certain typical characters that will vex and fret him.

There is the rummager, who snarls at all catalogues, and wants the freedom of the library, not for studious research, but to gratify his bookish propensity. "Five minutes with authors" is his watchword.

The crank, who has been defined as a person with an idea, without brains to carry it out, is a frequenter of libraries. His inquiries are for what the library does not possess. This affords him a text for lecturing the librarian and the managers. If the librarian's sentiments are not in accord with that idea of his he threatens to expose him in the newspapers.

The curiosity-hunter is another representative reader. He is brother to the rummager, but he does not despise catalogues. They exhibit the oddities of the library, at least the odd titles, such as Luther's "Vagabonds and Beggars," "The Foundling Hospital for Wit," or "The History of the Tread-mill." He passes quickly from one to the other, gleaning here and there till curiosity is satiated.

Another reader helps the librarian materially in his statistics; if he calls for one book he calls for an armful. The subject



he is investigating may require all the light the library can focus upon it; but he disposes of his armful so quickly that the query is, by what alchemy knowledge is appropriated so rapidly. It must be put to the credit of this age.

The intelligent tramp is another *habitué* of libraries. He is sometimes a desultory reader, sometimes he is a specialist, and he investigates with a profound air the most difficult problems; but that is as far as he goes. He is constitutionally lazy. He has some love for literature and science, but a far more appreciative love of leisure. He does nothing, produces nothing.

Then there are walking encyclopædias. You cannot name any author or work that they have not an acquaintance with. They can talk glibly on any subject; they absorb like sponges, but they give out nothing. They have a passion for reading; but they either do not, or will not, make their knowledge available to others. The colored man who not long since applied to me for something on the toothache, as he was to deliver a lecture upon this interesting topic, was not of this non-productive class. If his monograph has been published it will be a good book for close classification.

The librarian who feels the obligations of his position realizes that his influence as an educator is far-reaching, telling effectively upon the community in which he lives, and destined to extend far down the years to come. It becomes him, therefore, to fully equip himself for his work, and to give to his constituents the results of his ripest experience and his most unselfish attention.



## THE USEFULNESS OF LIBRARIES IN SMALL TOWNS

A few books in a small town may exert as much influence as many books in a large one; and the personal influence of their custodian and administrator may count for more. An early statement placing emphasis on this fact by Miss West of the Milwaukee Public Library (now Mrs. Henry L. Elmendorf) appears in the sub-joined paper read at the Buffalo Conference of the American Library Association in 1883.

Theresa West Elmendorf, who as the writer of this paper was Theresa Hubbell West, was born at Pardieville, Wis., Nov. 1, 1855, educated in Milwaukee and served on the staff of the public library of that city, being deputy librarian in 1880-92 and librarian in 1892-96. In that year she married Henry L. Elmendorf, then librarian of the Buffalo Public Library, and since his death in 1906 she has been vice-librarian there. In 1911 she was chosen president of the American Library Association—the first woman to hold this office.

There is still, as in the days when the story of the "wicked and slothful servant," who contemptuously hid his one talent in a napkin, was told, something discouraging in the sight of incomparably greater opportunities than our own in the hands of another.

The librarian of a small town or village may not cherish the envy of the man in the parable in his heart, and yet feel a certain depression, a sense that the small things he is striving—perhaps with all his might—to accomplish amount to very little, as he listens to plans for the construction of a building which will commodiously and conveniently house two millions

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of books; as he ponders over a printed scheme which will intelligently order upon the shelves a hundred thousand volumes, and is yet so flexible, so elastic, that this number may be indefinitely increased with no confusion, no necessity for rearrangement; as he sees a method of charging which has been slowly evolved to meet the ever-varying, ever-increasing needs of a circulation whose daily issues are counted by thousands.

Possibly this feeling has something to do with the small representation in this Association of the hundreds of lesser libraries which are scattered through the land. Whether it has, or not, the fact of this meagre representation remains, and remains to be regretted. That such a state of things is to be deprecated by the society goes without saying. Every new member, in one way or another, brings an added power and influence, which is by no means always to be measured by the size of the library which he represents, or the active part he bears in the deliberations. He may even be utterly silent, and yet an actual force; for no speaker fails to feel the inspiration which radiates from an attentive and enthusiastic listener. In ordinary society the accomplishment of being "a good listener" is one of the most enduring of charms. It does not lose its power among librarians. The prosperity of a paper as truly as a jest's "lies in the ear of him that hears it, never in the tongue of him that makes it."

To ask these unattached librarians, if perhaps an echo may reach them, to consider whether their isolation from their profession is not only a deprivation to themselves which they can illy afford, but a retarding of the progress of the true library spirit as well, and to suggest a thought which may possibly prove a stimulus to counteract the discouragement and depression before spoken of, is all that I have even hoped to accomplish in the few words which have, somewhat too ambitiously, been called a paper on "The usefulness of libraries in small towns."

In regard to the interest and profit of these meetings to the lesser libraries, I have heard it asserted, and it is, I think, true, that the papers and discussions were almost exclusively directed to the consideration of the aims, methods, and needs of great libraries. If the fact needs explanation, or justification, an ample one is found in the register of the names of the composing members, with their positions. That there would be a ready and cordial response to any general call for the discussion

of topics specially pertinent to small libraries is not to be doubted. Over the editorial columns of one of our most-used periodicals runs the legend, "Every man is a debtor to his profession." It was a most wise choice of mottoes by our friend, the editor and publisher, for in no profession is it more true than in our own. The constant missionary work which Boston and Chicago, and indeed every library of any repute in the country, has done and is doing, is proof enough that the obligation is appreciated. If the smaller libraries want the discussion of simpler, less technical methods, they have, probably, but to ask.

It may be objected that the great obviously includes the small, and that plans and methods which are good and suitable for the former need but to be reproduced in miniature for the latter. It is true, that, in many departments, the accident of size makes little or no difference in library economy; but in the administration of affairs, in the machinery of running, the director of a municipal library has many and accumulating cares, of which his less burdened rural brother need never feel the weight. Prof. John Fiske, some years ago, at the time when he was assistant librarian of Harvard University, very graphically described a portion of the perplexing duties which fall to the lot of even a university librarian, striving to correct the erroneous but too prevalent notion that such a position is a sinecure. He confined himself to an enumeration and description of the duties which are essentially professional, the multiplicity of details of the ordering, classifying, and cataloging of books. In this direction there is a difference only in amount between the greater and the less. But, in addition to all that Prof. Fiske described, a city librarian must needs oversee as well the thousand and one minutiae which go to make up the sum of a day's work in a circulating library. He must provide for the accurate identification and registration of his borrowers,—no light task when they number tens of thousands of the floating population of a western city, which has more active duties for her police than the following up of delinquent patrons of the public library. He must see to it that the thousands of books which flow over his counters are unerringly charged, and that tardy borrowers are warned of their remissness. These are but a few of the numberless details, many of which are trivial in the extreme, but which all go toward the making up of such

a day's work as "none but he that feels it knows." As a machine increases in complications a constantly greater percentage of power is consumed in overcoming friction. This attention to the routine of daily work, which forms much of the severest, because least satisfying, work which a librarian does, may be compared to the friction of machinery; and just in the proportion that the power of his mind and the strength of his body are taxed in this direction, by just so much are they reduced for other duties, the importance of which is specially prominent in the minds not only of the profession, but of the public as well,—an actual knowledge of the books which the library buys, and the exertion of an active personal influence in raising the standard of literature which is drawn from the library.

It is precisely in this line of personal influence that there seem to me to be special encouragements to the librarians of small towns, that here, notwithstanding their limited resources, they have peculiar opportunities for attaining an almost ideal standard of excellence in the quality of their work.

It would be unjust to say that a city librarian actually works harder than his country brother. The duties of the former are mainly those of guiding, overseeing, and correcting the work of others. The latter, with his own hands and brain, does most of the work himself. It is as if the one were architect solely, and the other not only architect, but mason and carpenter as well. One of the severest trials of the lot of a city librarian, in the West at least, is that he must work through many assistants who are not only utterly lacking in any real love or enthusiasm for their work, but who are many times illy-educated as well. The remedy for this state of affairs is not likely to be found until our boards of trustees take for their careful consideration the reply of a certain irate domestic to her remonstrating mistress: "You can't expect a good cook and all the Christian virtues for two dollars a week!" If the necessities of the work do not require the employment of more than one, two, or, at most, three assistants, the subtle electric current of the librarian's own enthusiasm may suffer the subdivision without being utterly dissipated. He can actually do much of the work himself. He comes into contact with his clientage, which is not so large but that he may hope to become personally acquainted with many of them, and, learning their tastes and



needs, easily become their trusted friend and guide. His catalog, too, is his own work, and it is perhaps safe to say that no one ever properly appreciates a catalog but its maker. Certainly no one else ever handles it with equal ease and intelligence.

I am afraid the catalog has never been made, and never will be, over which the ignorant and indolent will not be perplexed and deceived; and, after all is said, it is to the ignorant to whom the gospel of the public library is specially sent. If the cataloger himself is constantly at hand to explain intricacies, to supplement deficiencies, with his own perfect knowledge of his library, to answer even foolish and stumbling questioners patiently and intelligently, he may make the puzzling way of finding and getting a book so plain that "The wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein."

That this personal influence, when exerted, bears fruit, and that right soon, has been proved again and again. The following is from the last report of one of the largest libraries in the country: "The increasing public interest in the more scholarly books of the Library, and the large accession of visitors to the reference tables, are to be attributed partly to the Saturday-morning classes which have been conducted at the Library for the past four months." If such work makes so immediate and appreciable an impression upon a circulation which is numbered by hundreds of thousands, is there not a hopeful outlook, indeed, for small workers?

One has said that "A library is, after all, very much what its librarian makes it." There are too many conflicting individualities at work in a municipal library to make this, to any considerable extent, true; but in a small town or village the personal equation of the librarian may easily become the exponent of the power of the library.



## ADDRESS AT THE DEDICATION OF THE LI- BRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Dr. Talcott Williams, the orator of this occasion, Feb. 7, 1891, was at that time a journalist in Philadelphia. He has always been a welcome writer and speaker on literary themes.

Talcott Williams was born in Abeih, Turkey, July 20, 1849, the son of an American missionary. He graduated at Amherst in 1873 and in that year entered journalism, becoming later an editorial writer on several large dailies until 1912 when he was made director of the School of Journalism of Columbia University, New York City.

For the first and for the last time, the voices of men are heard in this place, dedicated to the more eloquent silence of books. Nowhere is man more and men less than in the library. In the presence of books individual learning pales. The scholar dies; the library lives. Yet only in part. In this bookish age, we fondly impute immortality to books. Nothing could be more false. Few books have the power of an endless life. Against these books of power stand a great multitude of books of use, which perish with the using. The vast mass of books, like the thoughts in our daily lives, sink into the background of the recollection of the race and furnish the soil from which fresh growths spring. Few there are who have written books of power. Not a score in all. Poets for the most part. High priests forever after the order of humanity, whose flaming message burns from age to age in the great tree of human existence, consuming and unconsumed. These books of power which live that humanity may not die, and books of use that die that others may live, divide literature between them. They constitute the warp and woof out of which the university

weaves the higher education. In its last analysis a liberal training is the mastery of books of use and a glad yielding to the mastery of books of power.

Controversy over the classics, wrangling over Greek, vain jangling over required and elective courses—these are details. Direct contact between the growing minds of each generation and the great minds of the race—this is essential. We smile at the space given Confucius in Chinese education; the Koran in Mohammedan schools; but this is only a perversion of the sound instinct which everywhere puts the young to school to the teachers of the race. Unless your education does this, it stands where the electric telegraph did before its wires were grounded—its batteries and instruments, its poles and wires useless until they were in direct contact with the elemental source of electric energy in the earth itself. So-called and mis-called practical systems of education, *realschulen*, which omit these eternal realities of the race, find when they have stuffed their pupils with the facts of the day that they are still insulated from the thinkers of all time. Fortunately for us and for our education, these books of power exist in more than one language and are accessible through more than one channel of learning. Thanks to the matchless translation of the Bible, one incomparable group of books of power is taught in every Sunday-school, though I doubt if this will be held sufficient reason for neglecting their study in every university. Greek holds another group. But it is the pitiful pedant's plea to urge their study because Greek is difficult. It is not because Greek is Greek, but because Homer is Homer that Chapman "spake out loud and bold" of the solitary text-book which has held its own for 2500 years, and links, as may it forever link, this university with the school of Athens.

"Yet still your Homer, living, lasting, reigning,  
And proves how truth builds in poets feigning."

It is because these books of power hold the truth that makes men free, working thoughts that perish never, that they live when the tongues in which they speak are dead. Books of power which transmit the spiritual life of the race keep the self-same spirit through all the transmigrations of speech. The scriptures of the race, no less than the scriptures of religion, enjoy a pentecostal gift of tongues, and are heard by every man

in his own language. Where such books are few in number, which a shelf or two will hold, there is a liberal education, and no elective course which permits their exclusion offers intellectual salvation. Some such books every race has found in its own literature as it reached the full stature of universal humanity, as our own English-speaking race, well-nigh within this generation, has discovered in adding Shakespeare to our general schooling. By the production of such books of power nations are justly measured. This is the wisdom which keepeth a city from destruction. The ship of state, however weighted with worldly wealth, moves a trackless keel through the waters of history unless some poet wings its course with "the proud, full sail of his great verse." We have all heard to-day from one whose lifelong devotion has raised him to the foremost rank of scholarship.

"Weave a circle around him thrice  
And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on honey-dew hath fed  
And drunk the milk of Paradise."

The study of such books is possible without any aid or apparatus whatever; so near is the diviner of letters to every one of us. But the first office which the library discharges in a university is in providing the limitless and manifold interpretation which the ages have builded about these great books of power. Better than all other books as are the books of power when read without study, they are infinitely bettered by all study. The literature of interpretation is only second in value to the literature of inspiration. The study even of books of power tends to become scholastic, narrow, provincial, letterwise, and spiritually dead, unless it is quickened and corrected by the fruits of the entire field of critical science. For lack of this more than one sacred book has met a fate which makes one feel, as well kill a book as give it a good name. Even in the teaching of books of power—which of all teaching needs but a soul and the book to awake eternity—the scholar is saved from himself by the library. He learns that with all the inspired prophets of the race no scripture is of private interpretation, that only time unlocks the weaving of these deeper oracles of humanity, because they spake not of themselves, but for the spirit of man. Nor need we fear that they will be smothered by

their interpretation. The mountains bear easily the weight of forests they uprear, and at the last and highest, no tree ascends above the snow-line of eternal thought.

But such ascents are as little the normal work of the university as of the road-builder. Its course lies chiefly along the broad highways of learning. Not books of power, but books of use, which sum first general, and then special and professional knowledge, occupy the greater portion of its time, just as the most saintly of mortals devotes more of his days to earning his living than to saving his soul. If the study of books of power is rendered more valuable by a library, the adequate teaching of books of use without one is impossible. Every text-book is a compromise between what is known and what can be taught. Two classes, I know, the publishers and the public, cherish the belief that there are text-books which sum current knowledge on this subject and that; but there are none. Every text-book is out of date the day after it goes to the printer, and the day before it gave out, not what is known, but the view of what is known then in vogue. It measures the advancing tides of learning by a gauge itself incessantly changing. We love to speak of authorities and standards. We delude ourselves. The whole field of letters and of learning is in a perpetual flux, whose only complete record is the library. We know that in science discovery succeeds discovery. There is nothing certain about a scientific book except that it will be wrong in five or ten years. Only now and then does some law-giver in science, some Newton or Darwin, descend the mount of discovery, bearing eternal and lasting laws of nature, writ by Nature's God. But in literature we dream of permanent reputation. Here, too, "Every century gives the last the lie." All the lesser priests of letters stand at shrines like that of Nemi and the Golden Bough,

"Beneath Aricia's trees,  
Where the ghastly priest doeth reign,  
The priest who slew the slayer  
And shall himself be slain,"

Every new book enters the arena about to die. The friendly verdict but deters fate; it does not avert it. The lesser criticism of letters must be done anew for every crop of readers, and in fifteen or twenty years most essays are left behind. The



procession of novels passes almost as rapidly. Few are read for thirty years, no English novels have held a popular place for past half a century, and a decade before the centenary of Waverly it begins to be whispered that Scott is no longer read by the young. Every generation must have its own translations of the classics, or reprints of those which have been forgotten. Morals, philosophy, and religion must be rewritten for it. Even histories, which linger a little longer on the stage than all the rest, yield to inexorable change. It is barely a century since Gibbon launched his mighty fleet, freighted with the fall of empire. It has long ridden the seas, but I think we are all well aware that its masts are already low on the horizon. No one author, no one work, can longer satisfy the world for the story of ten centuries of the race. For most of us these changes do not exist. Unconsciously we go on down the stream with the favorites of our youth and forget that both are growing old together. If literature is to be taught as it is, and not as it seems, to take one pregnant illustration, true of all studies, teacher and taught must have instant and vital access to that great body of books to which in every subject a text-book is but a rude and makeshift guide. The present can only be understood by the past, and both are needed to prophesy of the future. When this library has been enlarged to the utmost bounds of our anticipation, it will still have its limits to the specialists—joints in its armor of learning. Even at the British Museum I was told and discovered that no man is long at work without wanting some book with which it is unprovided.

But if teaching requires this great array, much more does the wider work of the college professor. To look upon him as set only to teach, to hear recitations, is as narrow and barren a view of his work as to think of the farmer as only occupied in feeding his calves. If a university is in the highest sense to be a teaching body, it must cultivate knowledge as well as pupils. Its professors must do more than harvest the learning and teach the discoveries of other discoverers. They must produce and discover. The spirit of genius bloweth where it listeth, but those books of use which play their part in giving each generation its critical standards, its histories, and the results of research are born only in full libraries. If a university is deficient in them, the lack is apt to be in that laboratory of

learning, its library. Unless a university is producing these, it is teaching only its matriculates when it ought to be teaching the public.

Much may be done, much accomplished, in the university without the library. Professional schools may multiply and grow, for in these men of professional learning supply the lack of books. It is even possible to carry on much research and produce valuable results along any narrow rising line of discovery in some science, which, like the coral, has but its growing edge alive, and for the rest is dead and under water. But if a university is to fill the whole round and play part in society, it must enjoy, employ, and extend the organized memory of man as represented in a great library. As the chief value of this lies, not in any view of its mere bulk and size, but in its relation to the recollection of the race, so the work of the university pivots on its ability to make vital the study of books of power, without which all learning and letters and science are but a vain show. Better, a thousand times better, the solitary study which brings men face to face with the spirit of man in these great movements than any university study which dwarfs to routine or degrades to mere rote these great works. For the object of all our study is not knowledge, but wisdom, and we move to dwindling ends if we search out all the secrets of matter and forget the secrets of the spirit. The great round of studies which make up the university, its libraries and laboratories, the accumulation of the past and the discovery of the future, these are each and all but the scaffolding by which the race rises to those conceptions of the Divine and the spiritual uttered and summed in its books of power. Listening to their teaching we may even learn that the ascent of man is more important than his descent, his future of more consequence than his origin—that it is his birth, and not his death, which is a sleep and a forgetting.

But books of use and books of power—the indiscriminate eulogy of books and reading has ceased to be possible even at the opening of a building dedicated to both. Their criticism has begun. Books are no longer the unique property of the scholar. We all buy books. Most of us read them. Many of you write them. The use of books is the one side of learning on which we all claim an opinion. Yet owned, read, written, or wholly laid aside in a busy life, the use of books, which each

of us knows, is individual and personal. Standing to-day in the home of a collection which, we trust, is to be one of the larger libraries of learning, landmark, and lighthouse at once, recording the past and lighting the pathless future, this individual and personal use is inevitable before us, cramping and limiting our conception of the relations, the aims, and the ends of a great library. Its very beginnings about us raise a doubt as to the wisdom of these endless accumulations of print. The peril of the mere aggregate was, perhaps, never plainer than in these days, when the great glacier of democracy slides on, making high places low and low high—one would be glad to believe, preparing the pathway of a new lordship of learning, but one is fain to fear making easy the track and broad the road for an evil over-lordship of mediocrity in learning and in literature. Our own democracy we are assured, has ceased to read anything but fiction, and demands this, not book-meal, but piece-meal, in monthly, weekly, or even daily doses.

The vast book-stack of the modern library, in which volumes lose their individuality as completely as urns in a columbarium, and like them but too often hold naught but dead and forgotten dust, is far removed from the still air of delightful studies which we associate with our own loved libraries. "I seldom go there," says Emerson of the University Library he used, "without renewing my conviction that the best of it all is already within the four walls of my study at home." The ablest of American editors recently urged in the most brilliant of American newspapers that the Library of Congress should be reduced to a sound working collection of 50,000 volumes, and the rest of its treasures dissipated or stored. I have myself heard the suggestion in regard to this library, and from one of academic connection, that its future usefulness would be increased if its future bulk were restricted. Whether we listen to the philosopher, the editor, or the university trustee; whatever fanned and winnowed opinions we apply to the great threshing floor on whose round the feet of the ages slowly tread out the wheat from the chaff in the garnered harvest of human thought, the remnant will be small—measured by high thought or narrow utility. The mere mass of our libraries already overtaxes our utmost ability to classify, to catalogue, and to administer. As we watch their bulk grow, on whatever side of the great altar of learning we worship, our fears increase that these heaped

offerings will stifle the sacred fire. This weighty weapon of letters forged by generations, this mighty armor and panoply of learning on whose myriad rivets so many hammers have rung, has outgrown the individual, and we begin to doubt its ultimate value to society.

Thus men ever err in their early thought on the new duties and fresh responsibilities created for men by associate man. In the field of organized life the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. The body is more than an aggregate of cells. The soul wiser than all its faculties. A nation more puissant than any census of its citizens. Man more than men. The secret of this supremacy over the sterile synthesis of sense, the root and germ mastery over the mere mechanics of life, and the bald and barren arithmetic of existence, lies in the capacity to know the present and to remember the past—in consciousness, out of which conscience grows, and in memory, Mnemosyne, mother of all the Muses and parent of all learning. Rightly in all history do we measure the value of every human society to Humanity by its power to awake to its own existence and be aware of its own past. This is the

—“mystery in the soul of state  
Which hath an operation more divine  
Than breath or pen can give expression to—”

This exalts the microscopic municipalities of Greece. This abases the dumb millions of Asia. Our own articulate millions, deficient in much, have done most for the world, not by material development, but by demonstrating that 62,000,000 spread over a continent can enjoy a consciousness as constant, continuous, and complete as the handful of citizens in the market-place of a Greek city, less in population than the ward in which we stand, smaller in area than the open spaces about this University. This general capacity to think as one and remember as a whole differences modern societies from all the past, save that of Greece. This has brought the awakening of nations in this century, a mightier resurrection with power than the awakening of men in the sixteenth century. With the future awakening of man the work will be complete. Until it is, national consciousness and national memory, creating conscious national life, are the determining conditions of human progress. The problem which Greece solved by making its communities small, the

modern world triumphantly meets by making them large and live. It secures this through the newspaper, the print of the present, which sets at one in consciousness vast masses of men which are set apart in space. For generations separated in time, the library, the print of the past, preserves for society the sacred oracles of memory. Misunderstood, misappreciated, placed in opposition, treated as antagonists, the editor assuring us that the newspaper has superseded the printed book, the librarian hesitating to cumber his shelves with the fugitive issues of the newspaper, these twin and vital organs in society still supplement and correlate each other.

The newspaper is the library of the moment, the library is the newspaper of all time. We open a newspaper to learn what we are as a nation. We enter a library to learn what we were. The revelations of neither are altogether satisfactory. We object to the library because it does not tell enough of the past. Too often we object to the newspaper because it tells too much of the present. The faults and shortcomings of the past, however plainly told, rouse no unpleasant sense of responsibility. In our own individual experience we have each of us had our private and personal quarrel with consciousness and memory for setting in too clear a light the sins and duties, the lacks and demands of the past and passing day. The revelation is no pleasanter when consciousness, memory and responsibility are social and national. Yet it is only by accepting both a complete social consciousness and a complete social memory that a society can be created whose ultimate end is the highest development of each of its individuals, whose service is the highest duty of all its members. Lavish margin of error in the newspaper too often leads us by some slain truth to ask with the soldier at Philippi:

"Messenger of error—  
Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men  
The things they are not?—"

But like Cassius, the truth is self-slain and dies among its friends. It still remains true that the newspaper is oftener challenged for telling what is unpleasant than for recording what is untrue, and the refined and cultured soul, which objects to the newspaper because it reeks with the ill news of society for whose ills no man can avoid his just share of responsibility,



but imitate the Pharaoh, who slew the messengers of evil and sunk in wilful ignorance to an ignoble grave.

The nation which lives by the newspaper will lose touch with the past. The nation which lives in the library will want knowledge of the present. We know all too much as Americans of the peril of thinking by the newspapers. German thought has run in the seclusive channel of the academic library to the lack and loss of civic consciousness. Germany was the last of modern states to act as a people. We were the first, the balance and connection between the newspaper and the library, news and liberal letters, the reporter and the professor, cuts up by the roots the frequent conception of the library as a place occult, withheld, untrod; shut apart from practical ends, the grant of society to the scholar—useful to letters, useless to life. This "idol of the market-place" falls to pieces confronted by the facts of social structure. As well might the brain be held silent, the voice of memory dumb, the light of consciousness in darkness by the side of the brute mechanical forces of the body; silence, seclusion, separation from the active life of society, these may be for the exchange and the market-place, the railroad and the factory, vast, dumb mechanic processes which perish in producing, but not for the library—not here, not here. These walls ring with war. They sound with the conflicts of the race. Here, rather than in any arsenal is heard

—"the infinite fierce chorus,  
The cries of agony, the endless groan,  
Which, through the ages that have gone before us,  
In long reverberations reach our own."

Thus much for the library in organized society. Long since have we known of books as the counsellors and comforters of men. To us all they have been teachers, to each of us companions. That great majority, greater in wisdom no less than in number, in which by the iron decrees of fate so many are called and so few are chosen to lasting immortality, holds all of whom living the world was not worthy, but of whom dead it slowly seeks to be. Here and here alone in all shapes and forms, we build the sepulchres of the prophets whom our fathers crucified and here doubtless our children will build the sepulchres of those who in our day are despised and afflicted



of men for the truth's sake. In joy and in grief, in life and in death some book supports, sustains, and soothes each of us, and in this library the very light has been trained to teach us at every window and door that we might enter it to pass within the presence of the mighty dead, to enjoy the companionship of that great company no man can number of wise men made perfect by time.

But to the seeing eye and the hearing ear, awake and attentive to all that a library is, not for men but for man, not for individuals but for the race, a greater than Solomon is here, and a mightier shape fills these halls and looks down from these shelves than all the trooped and illustrious dead. These books, shelf on shelf, these volumes, which fit subject by subject into the storied arch of human knowledge, resting one side on metaphysics and the other on history, the science of mind and the science of man, seem existent human memory. The complete library would round and fill the record of the race. At best, we have but a beggarly fragment. If a single copy of each of the 13,000,000 volumes which dropped from the press in 450 years were by some glad miracle multiplying knowledge gathered in one place, human memory would be unbroken for this short span of its long stay on the globe. Of 13,000,000 but 1,000,000 rest in the largest library on earth in Bloomsbury Square, and not a half are gathered in all known libraries. But such as it is, large or small complete or incomplete, a great library to its capacity gives, as this has begun to do, the only measure we have of the recollection of the race. Here we stand face to face not with men or nations, race or people, but with man. Blindly our humanity still struggles to shape its thought, dumb, inarticulate, unconscious, travelling in darkness and laboring in pain, century by century, and generation by generation, in the slow pilgrimage toward the conscious and consecration before it. The thunder of its power who shall know? Who shall sound its depths or scale its heights? Who shall know it in all its compass and sound, measure the confines thereof or prophesy its far final coming? These are all hid in the inscrutable decrees of God from the sight of men, but here, here and in places like this there rises before us like an exhalation of the past in these volumes, in this library, the majestic and visible memory of man.

Rightly here, as in that larger treasure house in London,

have we gathered museum and library under the same roof. These shapeless fragments worked by the early cunning of savage man, these inscribed marbles and sculptured slabs, these tablets and relics of another and a distant life, these all, each in its place, play their part in the recorded memory of the race. Out of every fragment from every book shines this Ancient of Days, who before Abraham was and after us shall be. Who and what are we, creatures of a day, toilers of an hour, to be measuring by our experience the metes and bounds in the manifestations of his mighty memory. Rather let our labor be given to render complete and to transmit unbroken our share in this great heritage by preserving the universal printed record of the life about us. The librarian falling far short of the honor and amplitude of his office, standing between the living past and the slowly dying life of the present, now and then apologizes for saving every empty volume, because none but prescient omniscience can tell which of 10,000 titles will be demanded by some solitary reader a century hence. How petty the plea, how narrow the argument, how infinitesimal the claims of this distant reader who after all may never appear! But how simple, how sufficient, how adequate becomes the reason for the preservation of every volume when we remember that it, too, is a part of this vast image of human memory seated by the slow river of time, more vocal than that of Memnon, older and younger, and with every fresh sunburst of genius breaking into fresh song!

In high reason has our own Historical Society gathered every volume which fell in this State and city from the press of the last century. Only thus can the span of human memory be set forth without a single forgetful flaw. If the like effort is made here to fill a like responsibility for the passing moment to the future, it is possible that the Historical Society of another century will not find it necessary to pay \$700 for an almanac which might once have been had for a penny, and yet how grievous the gap in the continuous and social memory of this our city if the solitary copy left of Bradford's Almanac, the first product of our press, had not found a secure resting-place.

A great library, therefore, does not merely transmit the memory of the past; it is daily providing memory for the future, safe preserved "against the wreckful siege of battering days." For the individual no worse hap can fall than loss of memory.

All other powers may remain. This lost, all are worthless. Stripped of memory, the soul has no future and no past, naught save an infructuose now. Nor less, the race. The destruction of the Alexandrian Library, whether with Abulfaraj we attribute it to the intelligent Moslem, or with Gibbon to the ignorant monk, was not the loss of so many books and parchments. It was the paralysis of a great lobe of human memory, fatal lesion had fallen on the localized organ of recollection in the brain of humanity. If we had the 200 plays of Aeschylus, the 160 of Sophocles, the last books of Livy, the missing annals of Tacitus, which this library held, the stature of these writers would not be increased. Like the greater peaks of every chain they already rise as they recede. It is only the foot-hill that needs bulk. These, and lost books like them, would fill for us the full measures of classic memory. As library after library perished and book after book shared the fate of those fathered by Ptolemy, the wreck and loss of human memory went on. The ages that we call dark lacked not in men of action. Those ages of faith had their men of thought matching any before or after. They laid for us the foundations of a civil liberty more indestructible than that of Rome. The piers of that great arch of law along which our rights daily travel in safety were built by them. Their architecture and their sculpture equals any. Their knowledge of the earth, as a whole, was immeasurably in advance of classic conception. They furnished in Dante one of the two or three poets for all time, and in the Roman Church they gave the race a creation and conception of whose future it would be a rash man who ventured to say that it was destined to be less than its past, imperial as its history has been. These ages were dark, not from lack of light and of leading, but from lack of memory. The ages had lost touch of the elbow in their march through the dark defile of time. The Renaissance was less the revival of human knowledge than the recovery of human memory. Age was joined again to age in the unbroken sequence of continuous recollection, and Greece laid her hands to transmit an Apostolic succession of memory on the bowed and studious head of the modern world.

To play its part in transmitting and preserving human memory this library is tonight opened and dedicated. Our Library Committee, and you, sir, its head, who have shown us that whole libraries of comment may be condensed into a

volume by your magic alembic, providing for criticism a new instrument of precision akin to the measurements and the analysis of the exact science—you, sir, in the loving care you have given this building, have not been providing a retreat for scholars; you have built and fashioned here another refuge and stronghold, fortified

“Against confounding Age’s cruel knife  
That he shall never cut from memory.”

The architect of this building has not wrought in mere brick and stone; he has added to those shrines and centres of human memory to which its treasures gravitate for their security and convenience. This university, in receiving this building from its Finance Committee, which has raised its cost, and whose head first suggested its erection, is placed in a position where it can discharge not only the first duty of a university, to which it has always been true, of thinking for the community, but the second, which is like unto it, of remembering for society.

## COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

One of the functions of the modern library is that of a huge cyclopedia, kept continually up to date by the acquisition of new material—books, periodicals, prints, pamphlets, clippings, publicity matter and manuscripts. It is the cyclopedia on cards long advocated by Dr. Dewey, except that the cards are in its catalogue and do not contain the information directly but serve only as keys to it. In this kind of service the library is for the moment getting away from books and nearer to the worker, whether at home, in school or laboratory, or in commerce and industry.





## LIBRARIES AS BUREAUS OF INFORMATION

Early material on this ancient function of libraries, so widely extended and developed of late, is hard to find. Only two papers are given here. The first, by Samuel S. Green, is part of an address delivered at the dedication of the Hoston Free Public Library Building in North Brookfield, Mass., printed in *The Library Journal* for July, 1896. A sketch of Mr. Green appears in Vol. I. of this series.

The ideal library is one which invites everybody who has a question to ask, which books contain answers to, to come to the library and put his question, with the assurance that he will be kindly received, his question sympathetically considered, and every effort made to find the answer desired.

I cannot better illustrate what I mean by saying that libraries should be bureaus of information than by giving instances of inquiries recently made in the library under my charge and explaining how those inquiries were met. I will select questions which were answered by sending out of town for books, and thus illustrate in addition the fact that libraries administered on advanced principles help one another.

A man came to me not long since and asked by what means he could dissolve a certain gum which he mentioned. I had the United States Dispensatory brought. The man did not find the answer wished for in that work, but did find a reference to a volume of the *Pharmaceutical Journal*. We did not have a set of that periodical; so I said that I would send away to borrow the desired volume. I sent to the librarian of the medical library in Boylston place, Boston, for it. He sent it to me immediately by express. That volume contained some of the information desired by the inquirer, but not all that he wanted. There was another volume of the same periodical which he thought would contain the facts which he was in search of. I

sent for that, promising to return both volumes at once. The second volume was immediately received. That contained just what was wanted.

By doing work like this a librarian may do much to add to the prosperity of the industries of a town.

Another man came to me to inquire whether we had a catalog of a certain southern society which purported to do hospital work.

I found that we had no catalog of the society named. It appeared that the applicant for information had been asked to contract to do \$4000 worth of work for a society of the name mentioned and wished to learn something about its standing. I told him that if I were in his place I should write to a gentleman in Washington, whose name I gave him, who knows all about medical institutions and hospitals throughout the country, to ask him about the society; I offered to write, myself, as the applicant felt timid about writing.

I did write and soon had the answer that the correspondent would advise the Worcester man to be very cautious about entering into a contract, for he knew nothing about the existence of such a society. I hope that I helped to save a Worcester business man from loss on this occasion.

Again, a boy who came into Worcester to school called at the library to ask me what I could tell his brother about a school for instruction in tanning leather in Freiberg, Saxony. Did it receive Americans? what was the cost of attending its sessions? what was its curriculum? etc., were questions asked.

I had no pamphlet to give the required information, but suggested that the Commissioner of Education at Washington be written to, to find out what information could be found in the library of his office. I found that it would be necessary for me to write the letter; so I wrote it. Soon the answer came giving the information desired and stating the address of the school. The answer was passed over to the applicant, with the suggestion that if further information were desired he should write to the officers of the school.

I remember doing much to start in her studies a resident of Worcester who has since become a distinguished Russian scholar, by helping her to get a Russian-German dictionary from abroad and by borrowing Russian books for her to read from Harvard College Library.

Three students of the Chinese language have received assistance at my library, one a missionary at home on leave, the other two students under the late Chinese professor of Harvard University, from dictionaries and other books borrowed for their use.

I have had occasion to hunt up books in the language of the Exquimaux for the use of an investigator in Worcester. I could not find the books in the libraries of Harvard University or Columbia College, and tried the libraries of other centres of learning without success, when I remembered that Dr. J. Hammond Trumbull, the well-known Indian scholar and historical student, had brought together a fine collection of philological works in the Watkinson Library at Hartford, Connecticut. The librarian of that library wrote me after a few days, saying that he had the books and would send them at once. He apologized for not despatching them before, saying that the library did not allow books to be taken out. He had waited to consult the president. The president had said that they must set aside the rule if Mr. Green and the library in Worcester wanted the books, for it was evident that they were needed for some important purpose. We got the books and they were used in the preparation of a learned paper.

Now, for closing illustrations, let me show you how libraries at great distances help one another. I will choose the relations of the library in Worcester to the Public Library of Denver, Colorado. Mr. Dana, the librarian of that library, sent to me to borrow one of the publications of the Browning Society of London. It was sent to him by registered mail and returned, safely, in the same way.

Next he wanted, for some student of mining, an extract from one of the volumes of the *Comptes Rendus* of the French Academy. The extract was copied from the volume and sent to him. There has since occurred the following transaction. A gentleman in Chicago had written to Mr. Dana, in Denver, to ask him whether he knew of a translation of the report of a government railroad commission in Holland which had recently been engaged in considering what kinds of paint are best to use in preserving iron, and whether he could tell him where to find the results of certain experiments which had been made in one of the bureaus of the U.S. Navy Department. Mr. Dana passed along the question to me, knowing that I had often to

answer questions of that kind. In order to find an answer to the first question, I at once set a young man at work looking at the indexes of the late volumes of the *Railroad and Engineering Journal*, and soon an important article was unearthed giving the results of the investigations of the Dutch commission. This piece of information was sent to Denver. I then wrote to Mr. Henry C. Baird, the Philadelphia publisher, to see if he knew of the publication of a translation of the report. He wrote back that he did not know of the publication of such a translation, but that there was a long article on paints useful in the preservation of iron in one of the most recently issued volumes of Spons's "Receipts." He promised, however, to make further inquiries. So he went to the rooms of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences and inquired there what gentleman in the city was most likely to have the information sought for. He was referred to some one connected with the Pennsylvania Railroad Co., who told him that he was not aware that the report had been translated, but referred the inquirer to an elaborate article extending through several numbers of the well-known periodical, *Iron*. Mr. Baird transmitted the information he had got to me and I sent it and other pieces of information gained since my last letter to the library of Denver. The information sent to Denver was sent to Chicago. So by the aid of two far separated librarians a person in Chicago, an intermediate city, distant from the homes of both, received information which he desired through Denver, Worcester, and Philadelphia. For an answer to his second question, this inquirer from Chicago was referred to the Navy Department at Washington.

A clergyman in Colorado Springs, and this is a final illustration, applied to the librarian of the same public Library in Denver for an old book by Goldwin Smith. He referred him to me. I knew him, having met him on my way to California. To my surprise I found we did not own the book. So I wrote to Mr. Winsor, the Librarian of Harvard University, and told him that the applicant could be trusted and would make good use of the information afforded him, and that he needed the book in preparing a course of lectures which he was to give at once at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Then I asked Mr. Winsor if he felt at liberty to lend the book. The next thing I heard in regard to the matter, a letter came from

the gentleman in Colorado Springs thanking me for the aid rendered, and saying that Mr. Winsor had sent the book and that it had reached him just in time to use in preparing a lecture. The library in the United States which was earliest in the field in doing the work of lending to other libraries systematically and on a large scale, in so far as I know, was that of the Surgeon-General's Office in Washington, long administered so intelligently and with so keen an eye for usefulness by Dr. John S. Billings.

Now, how can libraries in towns of the size of North Brookfield become bureaus of information?

Let them approach as nearly as they can to the ideal of seeing to it that everybody needing information gets it.

The first thing to do is to let it be understood that a library desires to have inquirers come to it for information, and that its librarian is ready to take time to find out whether the library contains books which will give the information desired.

If it does not have the needed books, the librarian tries to think where they can be had. Does anybody in town own them? If not, can they be had from a library in a neighboring town?

If these resources are not adequate, then let the librarian send to the nearest large centre to borrow books from the library there to answer the questions asked. Worcester would be the natural centre for North Brookfield to send to.

Individuals should not send to Worcester, but the librarian, having exhausted resources at hand, should send for the books, the library agreeing, of course, to make good damage and loss and pay the cost of carriage. An out-of-town librarian does not know the individual users of a library in a smaller town, but the librarian in that town does know his constituency and for whom it is safe to borrow books. Libraries should lend to one another, but the work of lending should be systematic.

As a member of the Free Public Library Commission of Massachusetts, I wish to say that the commission likes to come into close contact with the libraries of the state, and that the smaller libraries may from time to time find it helpful to put questions to its chairman at the state house in Boston, in person, through a representative, or by letter, about library administration.

People are breaking away from their leaders to-day. There is an immense amount of crude thought and imperfect informa-

tion in every community. I verily believe that not least among the instrumentalities by which thought may be matured and knowledge completed are public libraries when administered as bureaus of information by accomplished and earnest librarians, who will act as sympathetic friends and advisers to inquirers and help them to look at all sides of questions and form well-grounded judgments.



## THE LIBRARY FRIEND

Not all the information required of the Public Library is asked by those engaged in laboratory research or by experts in commerce and industry. Much of it is homely stuff, greatly desired and more or less easy to find. Much of it can be given offhand by the capable reference assistant, who thereby becomes what the writer of this article calls a "library friend" to her neighborhood.

Miss Winifred Louise Taylor was born in Freeport, Ill., Feb. 24, 1846. In 1874 she organized the first circulating library in Freeport and acted as librarian for twelve years. It was eventually incorporated in the Freeport Public Library. In 1900-01, Miss Taylor was in charge of the information desk at the Pratt Institute Free Library, Brooklyn. For many years she gave much of her time to work in the prisons, and in 1914 she published "The Man Behind the Bars," describing some of this work.

"The library friend" is the term that seems best to apply to that member of the modern library's staff whose work is a development of the service ordinarily rendered through the "information desk." Information-desk service as usually conceived, it is not; for the library friend deals with the tendencies, tastes, and aspirations of readers as much as if not more than with the definite question and answer respecting facts. The office indeed may be regarded as finding its first expression in the circulating libraries maintained by subscription in many of the smaller cities twenty-five years and more ago, when the free public library of to-day was comparatively rare. In those libraries every subscriber knew the librarian, and the librarian was personally

acquainted with every book on the shelves. To bring the books and readers into congenial relationship was the business and usually the pleasure of the librarian. The personal element was the heart from which the circulation of the books radiated—if the presiding personality lacked vitality and enthusiasm the library was a failure.

With the era of the democratic free libraries, with their more rapid growth, with their doors open to men, women and children of all classes, the human element, the personal relation of librarian to the reader suffered a gradual eclipse, until, in some libraries more perfectly developed on the technical side, the personal equation vanished altogether. The library became a great machine, into which a number was dropped, and out of which a book was dropped like corn from the hopper. We all know how formidable this mechanism is to those unaccustomed to modern library methods. To the uninitiated the card catalog is an abomination, an unsolved problem, a delusion and a snare. The boy who is interested in athletics, fumbling over the card catalog in Micawber-like fashion, hits upon the title "Morning and evening exercises"; he straight away hands in the number thinking he has found a prize. It is discouraging and depressing when the machine shoots out to him a volume of devotional compilations. He has tried his luck and it has failed, and as he was reminded only last week that a book cannot be exchanged the same day on which it is drawn out he retires with "Morning and evening exercises," a sadder, but not a wiser boy. It is in accord, therefore, with the process of library evolution that a closer personal relation between reader and librarian should be developed through some such medium as is here outlined under the designation "the library friend."

One of the library problems just now is this: given on the one side 100,000 books and on the other 50,000 people. How is each individual to be brought into contact with the particular book that he wants? Where open shelves are practicable a great advantage—to the discriminating reader, an inestimable advantage, is gained; but the majority of librarians have not room to throw any department open to the public; and even among open shelves the person whose judgment of books is wholly untrained often misses what he is looking for.

The assistance given by the reference room is invaluable. There no one goes away unsatisfied; but the reference room

reaches only those in pursuit of a definite subject. Beyond its range is the drifting, aimless reader, the searcher after something he knows not what. The dull, the diffident, the beginners in the use of libraries, those who read purely for amusement and those who want the new books—new spelled with a capital n and book with a small b—old persons, those whose eyesight is defective and whose glasses strike the card catalog at the wrong angle, foreigners who use English with difficulty and diffidence—all these gather together in the delivery room at once, and efficient as the assistant may be—and sometimes they effect miracles—it is impossible for them to give the different individuals the help each one needs. In the libraries where the human element is most withdrawn the case of these people is hard.

To bring the personal relation again into the library and to develop it with the growth of the needs of the public, with this end in view, a number of libraries have introduced the information desk. By common consent, perhaps in the eternal fitness of things, this position so far seems to have been relegated to woman.

"She is a reading lady, and far gone in the pleasures of friendship." So wrote Sir Roger De Coverley of the object of his affections, and no one could more felicitously describe two of the qualifications for the one presiding at the information desk. A reading lady she must be; and it is no less important that she be far gone in friendship for the public. To study their needs; to be receptive as wax to their impress, and responsive with heart and soul as well as with mind. This all around sympathetic power is the fundamental requisite of true service in this position. She may be a person of many words or of few; a good listener she must be. Success depends less upon temperament or gifts than upon an attitude of inward receptivity and outgoing friendliness—the attitude that radiates a home-like atmosphere and insensibly sets the stranger at ease. Emerson quaintly described certain faces as "decorated with invitation." This style of decoration will be permanently in fashion in this position if the invitation from the heart is a magnet strong enough to draw within its circle those who are in need of help. It is most necessary, also, that a certain poise be preserved. To be ready but not over anxious to assist; to be responsive but not intrusive; to be suggestive but never insistent;

to recommend books without forcing one's own literary tastes or standards upon others; while helping new comers, to seek to make them independent in their use of the library instead of leading them to rely on some one else to do the work and use all the judgement for them, all this requires a nice adjustment of balances. And it is well to have on hand the tact which is the art of lessening social friction, and the sense of humor so invaluable as a lubricator in human relations. When any one comes to the information desk with a grievance, irritated, if not angry, to be met with simple good nature, and not to be taken too seriously, and yet to find instant readiness to adjust the cause of annoyance if possible, soon dissipates the feeling of antagonism or injury. Such encounters ought not to tax one's patience. They sometimes turn out to be rather interesting.

Nor need stupidity tax one's patience. What more pathetic than the isolation of one who is slow to perceive and to grasp? It is a terrible handicap. To rescue the dull from their dullness should be the first impulse, and shallow is the sympathy that does not reach out to such instinctively. It is not enough to be able also to unlock the resources of the individual.

People come to libraries from all sorts of homes. To the man or woman living in the midst of ugly and sordid surroundings, where the days are crowded with drudgery, the weekly visit to the library becomes a social event; it is a lift into a fresh atmosphere, into another plane of life. A passing greeting from the information desk gives a sense of welcome and of relationship to the reading public. Five or ten minutes of cordial contact, a brief conversation with one unrelated to their world of worries, is a refreshing experience. To be recognized as a thinking, reading being, with opinions about books, instead of a human machine for cooking, scrubbing and sewing, or money-getting, puts new life into one.

But this social side of the work of the information desk must rest on the solid foundation of practical qualifications. One must possess the knowledge of a wide range of books, the power of concentration on the one person or the one subject in hand, and the mental alertness that perceives when another person is waiting. The more perfect the understanding of the system of classification of the books and of all the technical side of library work, the more effective will be the service at

the information desk. There the resources of the library should be at command, and should be reached rapidly and accurately. When any imaginable or unimaginable question may be asked at any moment, from "May I use your pencil?" up through the whole range of history, art, literature, politics, science or religion, one must know the ground thoroughly in order to meet these demands. Topics requiring special research are passed on to the reference room, but the inquirer should be put on the right track when he wants but a single book from the delivery room.

The new-comer must be instructed in intelligent use of the catalogs and helped towards self-reliance from the start. The young people must be assisted in making out their first lists, and these lists should represent a variety of authors, in order that the author who pleases can be followed up independently through the card catalogs. A well selected first list for boys or girls should place at their command a range of 50, 60, or 100 books. It is surprising how few writers are known to the average boy or girl who comes to the public library for fiction. The field of the boy is often bounded by Alger, Ellis, Optic, and Henty, while the girls may know only Sophie May and Miss Olcott. Beyond are unknown seas. One of the early developments at the information desk will be carefully-selected lists of books for boys and girls. They grow under one's hand as the young people in turn recommend additions. This sense of co-operation wins the confidence of those who are quick to suspect and ward off any lurking desire for their improvement on the part of the library. Notwithstanding that the starting point must always be the taste and inclination of the reader, it is a simple matter to keep the pressure in the right direction. Carefully-selected fiction lists for older readers also meet a want. Such lists do not include the works of the standard, voluminous writers known to every one. Into them are gathered some of the old favorites of a generation ago, or later novels which may have happened to miss fame and yet possess an abiding charm and the indispensable element of interest. There are hundreds of such books, perennially delightful, novels just now submerged under the continually rising tide of new fiction. It is a piece of pure good fortune for the reader who turns in despair from the pursuit of "David Harum," "Eben Holden," or "Janice Meredith," to find a fresh range of



unheard-of novels of equal or more than equal interest. This enlargement of their circle of congenial authors is welcomed with every grateful appreciation. A list of good short stories is another resource, and one of cheerful books for invalids; stories that are neither morbid nor tragic. Young working men who can come to the library only at evening are glad of assistance in selecting books related to their work and they are quick to respond to any evidence of sympathetic interest in their pursuit. Young girls employed during the day who wish to make up for the lack of opportunities in school are eager and grateful for advice in outlining courses of reading and study; those studying music are glad of guidance into the more interesting pathways of musical literature, or it may be the amateur in some branch of art who reveals a cherished ambition in the hope of obtaining help in this direction, and delightfully friendly relations spring into being while these various lists are under way.

Often the chance encounter, the mere passing remark, brings the happy inspiration as to just the right books, as when one catches a glimpse of a deep enthusiasm for nature surviving in the breast of a man through fifty years spent between city walls. To introduce him to Richard Jeffries, most intense, nearest to nature's spirit, and least known of nature's lovers, is to enrich the remaining years of this man's life.

All who go to the library go as seekers. Some are seeking merely entertainment, others are searching for knowledge, but many are struggling with the deep problems that beset us all, perhaps in moral or spiritual darkness, and looking only for light. If one's heart is with the people, nothing so quickens perception as sympathy. One notes the trend of the reading of the individual, and often what he is seeking is intuitively divined. Perhaps the simple remark, "If you can tell me just what you want I may be able to find it for you," results in a frank statement of the difficulty, or an outburst of sudden confidence is given from the impulse that makes it often easier to confide in a stranger than in a relative. And it counts for a good deal just then if the one at the information desk knows what writer has felt and thought most deeply and has written most clearly and helpfully on that subject. Few are the needs of the human heart or mind that are really beyond the reach



of help from books—books in which we find the reflection of our every mood, the expression in our inmost aspiration, the conservation of the feeling, the experience and the wisdom of the race.



## CONTROL AND GUIDANCE OF READING

Border regions are those of greatest interest, for they are regions of contact and therefore places where things happen. This is a border region between the field of the librarian and that of the teacher. Its activities are the sole justification for the name "library teacher" bestowed upon assistants in many of the homelier city districts. Here the librarian must tread warily. He can not push or pull; he must effect what he desires by making it attractive to the reader. In the five following papers this function is somewhat elaborated—a very modern phase of library work and one most nearly concerned with its socialization.



## PROBABLE INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL OUT- COME OF THE RAPID INCREASE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A paper by Rev. Dr. Pierce, then editor of *Zion's Herald*, a Methodist publication, read at the Lake George Conference of the American Library Association in 1885. Notably free from the caution and hesitancy then often appearing in the public utterances of the clergy regarding popular libraries, and full of belief that their power of guidance would make them "powerful elements of culture."

Bradford Kinney Pierce was born in Royalton, Vt., February 3, 1819, and graduated at Wesleyan University in 1841. Entering the Methodist Episcopal ministry, he was also occupied for many years as teacher and editor, being agent of the Sunday School Union in 1845-56, editing *Zion's Herald* in 1872-88 and then serving as librarian of the Free Library at Newton, Mass., in addition to his other duties, until his death, April 19, 1889. He has been called "the Nestor of New England Methodism."

The free public library is now becoming the favorite post-humous beneficiary of our men of wealth. Heretofore it has hardly been esteemed respectable in the vicinity of Boston for a man of fortune to die without leaving a generous bequest to Harvard College or to the Massachusetts General Hospital. The city and town library is now beginning to share liberally in these testamentary benefactions. The college requires too considerable a sum in our days to be often adequately endowed by the estate of one patron, but the library can be established and be quite amply appointed by the accumulation of one public-

spirited citizen, and be made to become his most-honored and permanent memorial. Every town of any size in our New England and Northern States either has, or will soon have, one of these people's universities, through the individual gift of a generous citizen, or by public establishment.

This general gathering of large bodies of books in all our principal towns, opened freely to all ages, can but produce a manifest influence for good or evil in the community. The familiar and forcible response to the objection made to the establishment of so many small colleges in the land, rather than securing their consecration and abundant endowment and appointment in a few centres, is that the "fresh-water institution," so called, brings the opportunities for a liberal culture near to thousands who could not otherwise be prompted to make the incident sacrifices to secure an advanced education. The immediate presence itself of the institution is an inspiration to study. So the presence of the numerous libraries, with their wide-open doors to all, and their attractive shelves, becomes a powerful incitement to those who otherwise would hardly think of seeking enjoyment or profit in reading. The statistics of these city and town libraries fully confirm this *à-priori* presumption as to their influence in awakening and cultivating an interest in books among all classes. And this influence of books upon a reading community is very powerful. It is more subtle than human companionship. The latter strongly affects and moulds the character; but books reach us at lower depths. They inspire us more profoundly; they touch our whole being, intellect, heart, and executive purpose; they imperceptibly create or modify our ethical standards; they become our models of life and conduct; they lay hold of our highest and most sacred sentiments and color our views of the life beyond.

It can but be, where the circulation of these volumes reaches nearly all our families and enters into the thoughts and emotions of every day of the year, that manifest results for the better or the worse will follow. Many thoughtful persons have been honestly anxious in reference to the result of the experiment. The public press has sent out its serious forebodings from the pens of those who have taken depressing views of the matter, and alarming tracts have been published, giving painful criticisms upon the contents of certain libraries, the nature of special volumes found upon their shelves, and the amount of



circulation of works of fiction of not the most elevating, or even wholesome, character. To all this we answer that these criticisms, whether well founded or not, have not been without their influence in calling attention to the most intelligent of our institutions. Their officers are cultured gentlemen and ladies, clearly apprehending the relation of the library to the intellectual and moral development of the community and its true office in administering to the improvement, as well as enjoyment, of its patrons. It is more and more becoming an educating rather than a simply entertaining institution. It is every day becoming more widely recognized that it is not intended to be a competitor with the circulating library, but rather an antagonist, winning the patrons of the latter to the reading and study of a higher order of literature. While the majority of library managers do not take the extreme view that has been strongly advocated by some quite intelligent library trustees, that the public funds should not be used for the purchase of fiction, which may be considered an intellectual luxury, but only for improving and educating literature, they do seek to carefully sift the lighter issues of the press, securing the best and the purest of this character. They also study at the same time, through their accomplished officers and assistants, in the use of the local press, through the cooperation of the teachers of the schools and the leaders of public opinion, with the aid of parents, to awaken especially in the minds of the young people a taste for regular and substantial courses of reading in the various departments of science, history, and *belles-lettres*. The success that has attended these efforts is full of encouragement. Our superintendents and librarians do not simply remain at their desks, or stand behind their tables to respond to the call for books, but make themselves felt in the community, aiding in the investigations of students, assisting in the search for authorities, facts, and illustrations, suggesting plans for interesting the youthful readers in scientific or literary studies, and calling attention to the rich accumulations upon the library shelves. The annual reports of these institutions are constantly showing improvement in the character of the reading in their several communities,—a gradual decrease in the lighter works, and an increase in the call for books of art and science, of travel and biography, of poetry and philosophy. A significant falling off in the number of books taken from the

library, in many places, is noticed, while the patronage of the library is manifestly increased. The works that are now selected are substantial, requiring thought and time in reading. They cannot be hurried over in a day like the light novel, and hence the decrease in the number of volumes read is a most gratifying evidence of improvement in the quality of the reading.

The free library is becoming the effectual antagonist, also, of the superficial news and story papers. Their "name is legion." They assault the eye with their staring illustrations, and tempt the reader by their cheapness. Especially at the close of the week, supplies of this trash, with periodical sheets of a little higher order, but still superficial, have been heretofore laid in for the hours of respite from labor on the Sabbath. This light, disconnected, desultory reading, carried on through all the unoccupied hours of the week, while it secures a smattering of information, can but be of a very vicious intellectual tendency, not to speak of its moral influence. The free library and its reading-room offer without expense the perusal of the best periodical literature in the land, and permit and tempt their patrons to secure, for the unemployed hours of the approaching Sabbath, works of deep interest and of an improving character.

We are confident that this multiplication of well-selected and constantly growing collections of standard and current literature is full of promise of good, and, as generally managed among us, is attended with small and easily corrected evils. It is inspiring the establishment of literary and scientific clubs, awakening the ambition and inventive powers of our mechanics, encouraging a liberal and cultivating course of reading among our school students, and affording an immeasurable amount of pure and refining enjoyment throughout the community. We look upon it as one of the significant and powerful elements of a higher and general culture among the people, and prophetic of far greater and better fruits in the future.

## POSSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN MANUFACTURING COMMUNITIES

"A love of reading as a keynote to broader culture," and how the librarian may guide reading by stimulating that love—a paper by Mrs. Sanders of the Pawtucket Public Library (long lovingly known among librarians as "Mawtucket of Pawtucket").

Minerva Amanda Sanders was born in Providence, R. I., Feb. 1, 1837. About 1876 she became librarian of the subscription library in Pawtucket, R. I., organized in 1852, which preceded the present free library; and when about six months later it was turned over to the town, she continued in charge, serving until her death, March 20, 1912. Mrs. Sanders did notable pioneer work in her profession, especially in the adoption of free access to books and in work with children. This paper was read at the Thousand Islands Conference of the American Library Association in 1887.

Sir John Herschel, in an address to the working people of Windsor and Eton upon the occasion of opening a public library for their use in 1839, said:—

"If I were to pray for a taste, which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and as a shield against its ills however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading.

"Give a man this taste and a means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making a happy man, unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books.

"You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history; with the wisest, the wittiest, with the tender-

est, the bravest, and the purest characters who have adorned humanity.

"You make him a denizen of all nations, a contemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but the character should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of associating in thought with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of humanity.

"It is morally impossible but that the manners should take a tinge of good breeding and civilization from having constantly before one's eyes the way in which the best-bred and the best-informed men have talked and conducted themselves in their intercourse with each other.

"There is a gentle but perfectly irresistible coercion in a habit of reading well directed, over the whole tenor of a man's character and conduct, which is not the less effectual because it is really the last thing he dreams of.

"It cannot, in short, be better summed up than in these few words: It civilizes the conduct of men, and suffers them not to remain barbarians."

Recognizing this love of reading as the keynote to broader culture and a higher standard of morals, one by one, during the last half-century, libraries have been thrown open to the public that were before only accessible to the scholar (and often grudgingly even to him) and new libraries established, till, in every community, a free public library is as much a necessity to-day as its churches or its schools.

Even in the troublous days of the Revolution our forefathers were awaking to this demand, for in 1776 there were 29 "partially public libraries in the colonies"; in 1800 there were 49; in 1876 the number had increased to over 3,000; while to-day we number between 5,000 and 6,000 public libraries, comprising a total of over 20,000,000 volumes.

The influence of a public library is contingent upon many circumstances—its community, its finances, and largely upon its management. Possibilities which may be developed in one library, in another remain unnoticed; while something of equal importance is made of incalculable benefit to its own community. Thus, though working on a general principle, each library independently works out the problem of the greatest good to the greatest number of its own patrons. Happily, therefore, there

is no cause for the rivalry and jealousies that disturb the harmony of so many fraternities.

It is my pleasure and privilege to live in a manufacturing community; to watch the development of practical ideas; to follow the progress of mechanical improvement, and witness with pride their results, for the distinctive feature of Pawtucket is the variety of its industries.

We remember with pride our parentage and the honor due to it; but surely when Samuel Slater, after a weary time of toil and discouragement, perfected the first power machinery for cotton spinning in this country, and with a pardonable pride saw it in successful operation in the first bona fide cotton mill in the United States, which still stands in the centre of our city—(I speak with authority though I am fully aware that this is a case parallel to the "Seven Grecian cities striving for Homer dead.")—When, as I said, this was accomplished in 1791, there was no power of the imagination that could have foreseen the change from the little mill village on the Blackstone River, with its few hundred inhabitants, to the present city of 25,000, 13,000 of whom are engaged in industrial pursuits, its 70 schools, its 600 manufacturing establishments, embracing the greatest variety of industries.

But Pawtucket is only one of many thriving manufacturing communities:

Waltham, Mass., the adoptive parent of the American Watch Co., which had in 1865 a population of but 7,000, now numbers over 16,000, with not less than 7,000 employés, 2,500 of whom alone are employed by the American Watch Co.

Lowell, Mass., according to the census of 1883, had a population of 66,000, one third of whom were employed in its 300 manufactories.

Manchester, N.H., with a population of 40,000, employs 15,000 persons in its 102 manufactories.

And so I might go on enumerating special statistics, but these are simply representative communities. It is sufficient for my purpose to say that there are in the United States about 254,000 manufacturing establishments, employing nearly 3,000,000 persons, at an average wage of \$1.15 per working day.

It is to this great class that we look for much of the prosperity of our country; for we find that the value of the product

of the manufactures of the United States for the last ten years was \$5,400,000,000.

It is also an important factor in our government, for the pride and principle of our country is "*Vox populi, vox Dei.*"

In these days when skilled labor is at a premium, when issues are constantly arising requiring the best legislative ability, and the demand for both is far greater than the supply, how are we to meet it? The reply comes from far and near, "Educate the people." Yes, educate the people! for they are very ready to be educated, many of them striving with a self-denial known only to themselves to give to their children the education that was denied them; our schools of to-day are showing good work from the sons and daughters of these parents, and its influence is blessing their homes.

But many are denied that privilege, and cannot afford to spare their children's wages for even the three months covering the compulsory law of education.

At the average wage a private library though small is unattainable; a newspaper may be a luxury indulged in. Where, then, is the royal road to learning? We do not hesitate to say the free public library is that long-sought highway. Then open wide the doors; let us stock our shelves with the best mechanical and scientific works; see that each craft is especially represented; supply the works on the leading questions of the day, also works pertaining to the civil government. In this we must not be partisan; these subjects must be considered in all their bearings, and in the broadest manner.

The biographies of working men who have attained honor by their practical worth and preserverance either in mechanical, civil, or military service must have a prominent place; history and travel will receive their share of attention; while we will not forget that the working man and woman must have some amusement and recreation, and that "strong meat" is not always desirable; our fiction department must be supplied with all that is bright, fresh, inspiring, and helpful, but nothing that will create a craving for greater stimulant, or tend in the least degree to weaken the moral character; for the office of a public library is to develop to its fullest capacity the best powers of a community. The extent of such development must depend largely upon the manner of its use.

Believing that the first entrance into a library should bring



with it that most delightful sensation, the companionship of books, we have at our own library, contrary to the custom which now obtains, thrown open our shelves to the public, with the title and name of author plainly printed on each volume so that literally "he who runs may read."

An old man said to me a few days since: "I get little time for reading now, but I love to come in and look at the books; they bring to mind many a thing that I read long ago, and I carry it with me all the day through; 'tis an education just to be with them." You say, How can this be done without loss of books?

Ten years of experience has taught us that there is a point of honor in these working people in this regard, with which we must come in contact to fully appreciate; we have lost no more books with our open system than other libraries with their closed shelves.

Understanding fully the value of a catalogue, especially a closely classified one, to the scholar; to an uneducated man it is a labyrinth through which he gropes till in despair he either lays it aside or appeals for help. What is a catalogue to a man who asks for "a book on birds," and when we direct an attendant to give him a certain work on ornithology, quickly replies, "'Tis not that I want; 'tis a book on birds;" or the girl who wants an "adequate book" to furbish up her society manners. Not one in ten persons comes to a library with a definite object.

Roaming at will among the books, the sight of Blaikie's "How to get strong" has been the first step toward the recovery of health otherwise lost; John B. Gough's "Darkness and daylight" has brought in the same way happiness to a wretched household; while Andrew Carnegie's "Triumphant Democracy" has awakened in more than one citizen an interest and pride in his native or adopted country heretofore unknown.

There are the contents of the shelves to select from; no fear of any one leaving the library without a book; whereas, after presenting from the catalogue a list of books to be returned as "not in," he either "hasn't time," or "will make no further trouble," and passes out unsatisfied.

I have already said that a possibility in one community may be impracticable in another; with us this open system has proved an unqualified success.

A community of this class is not aggressive; on the con-

trary they are in a library rather shy. They should be met with prompt service, and the courtesy of the drawing-room. Make them welcome as they enter the library; it is their own; help them to cultivate a personal pride in it; ascertain their tastes, (many of them will surprise us), and call their attention to such works as will gratify them, gradually leading them to higher standards when it is necessary.

If they are seeking special subjects and need our help, let us exhaust our references. To "give to him that asketh" and "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver" should be a librarian's watch-word.

What does it matter if half of the pleasures, and all of the ills of our patrons be poured into our ears? It only brings us nearer to them, and shows us how to be more helpful, and widens the influence of our work.

" 'Tis a wise community that enables its trustees to give to their librarian sufficient clerical assistance to allow him to mingle with the people, to learn their habits and tastes, to direct their reading (especially of the young), and to assist them in their researches; for we all know that peculiarly inherent weakness of human nature, to seek for information from the highest source, and to be better satisfied, even though the same help may be rendered us by a subordinate.

The reading-room in connection with a public library may be made an important agent in the education of a community, especially of its young men and children.

After a day of hard work, what are the homes to which many of these young men return? The accommodations of a cheap boarding-house, which means a room generally occupied by two or more, with barely furniture for necessity to say nothing of comfort.

What inducement has he to spend his evenings at home? Where, then, will he go? Into the street, to drift into the place offering the most attraction for the least money; alas! too often at the bitter cost of misery to himself and sorrow for his friends hereafter.

This, then is our work, to make our reading-rooms so attractive that they will be drawn hither. Have them well lighted, well heated and ventilated, supplied with the daily papers of our own and other cities, also the current magazines. We cannot afford to be niggardly in this work. Let us supply our

tables with illustrated mechanical and art works, also the best literature of the day. The more freedom that we can give, the better the results. The young man will pass in and out at his pleasure, spending an hour or two with whatever pleases him best, till the reading-room largely takes the place of home, and reading becomes a part of his daily existence, the beneficent effect of which he will carry through life.

There are lying on our tables week after week by actual count 600 papers, magazines, and books, from "Baby Days" to "The Cathedrals of the World," free to the public. This has ceased to be an experiment, for during the ten years our losses have not amounted to \$10; and there are days when nearly if not quite 500 persons sit at our tables.

The greater possibilities, however, are with our children, the future parents and guardians of our commonwealth. What are we doing for them as public libraries, as educators? Working hand in hand with the schools faithfully and well, as shown by the valuable and interesting reports published in the Library journal, without which we would know as little of the library work outside our own as we would know of the outside world without our newspaper. Long may it live!

Does our responsibility rest here? What of the multitude of waifs worse than homeless, without restraining or guiding influence, to be thrown into the community to swell the numbers of paupers and criminals, many of whom, yes, the majority of whom, have the same gentle instincts and latent ability as our own little ones so tenderly nurtured.

We may say this is the work of charitable institutions and humane societies; not so; this is essentially our work. We call ourselves educators, and have the honor to be recognized as such; the work of a public library is to teach, to elevate, to ennoble, there is no limit to its possible influence.

Must we wait, then, until our children (for they are all ours as a community) are fourteen years of age or upwards before we begin to teach them the first principles of right living, of mental growth, of love to their neighbor?

We maintain that we cannot begin too early, and that this is a part of library work from which we get the greatest percentage of reward. Again I ask, What are we doing for these children, the future pride or dishonor of our communities?

Brockton, Mass., has a reading-room to which children are

admitted, and which they are encouraged to visit, so well patronized that it will soon double its seating capacity.

Waltham, Mass., has taken a step in the right direction. The trustees of the public library have supplied two tables in their waiting room with *Wide awake* and *St. Nicholas* for the children.

Lowell, Mass., admits children during the day, and supplies them with juvenile magazines. Manchester, N.H., admits children to the reading-room; but unfortunately, from various causes, they are unable to offer the necessary attractions, and few visit it.

Newport, R.I., can only furnish *St. Nicholas* for want of money, but children may come and go at their pleasure.

Olneyville, R.I., is offering every inducement that their means will allow to draw children to their reading-room; and to interest and instruct them seems to be the object of those in charge.

Willimantic, Conn., admits children at the age of 12 years.

Somerville, Mass., supplies juvenile magazines, and has no limit to age.

Springfield, Mass., also admits children at all ages.

The Boston Public Library, the parent of the public libraries of New England, true to its paternal instinct, begins to exert its influence over the children at the earliest years.

There are doubtless others from whom we would be glad to hear, but I confess that, after visiting and inquiring among public libraries concerning this work, I became disheartened and ceased investigation, for the popular verdict seems to be "*Children and Dogs not allowed.*"

With our experience in this work with the children since the opening of our library in 1876, and knowing the possibilities only waiting for development, I am emboldened to speak earnestly.

Let us gather the children in; give "milk for babies," in the illustrated books which they may understand though they cannot read; juvenile magazines and literature of a healthy nature to counteract the pernicious trash that is flooding our communities.

It is only necessary to refer you to the specimens of flash literature which our boys have relinquished to us, with pale faces and trembling hands, after reading from the scrapbook

here on exhibition the cuttings from the newspapers of the day showing the bad influence of the dime novel. It tells its own story far better than I can tell it, and the one in whose mind this great remedial agent originated is daily blest in seeing the good results of his experiment.

Help the children to begin early to understand that even they are of use in a community; awaken their pride and ambition in the right direction, and their future is assured.

If there are those who doubt the practicability of this work, and, like Hosea Bigelow, would

"Give more for one live bobolink  
Than a square mile of larks in printer's ink,"

come and see our "Flower Band," numbering 200 children, gathered from the little girls and boys who frequent our library and reading-room, from five years of age to fourteen; from the little fellow who brings three wilted daisies, or a rose without a stem, to the dainty miss with a bouquet from the greenhouse.

Their badges signify a pledge to bring flowers once a week (if possible), and to respond to a call to distribute them in any place where they will add a bit of brightness to a shadowed household; also to seek out such homes and report them. Several names have been already stricken from our list, of those who have died leaving a blessing for these little missionaries.

The influence of this work upon the children and the community cannot be told. It must be seen to be appreciated.

I have endeavored to show that upon the influence of the public library working in harmony with the spirit of the churches and the schools, with the single object of the highest welfare of the people, depends much of the prosperity, morality, and culture of our industrial communities—I might also say of our country; but when we consider that there are less than 6,000 public libraries in the United States, are we not tempted to say in the words of old, "What are they among so many?"

But let us remember that the same spirit that gave power to feed the multitude from the "five loaves and fishes" still lives in the hearts of men to animate them to good works, as shown by Messrs. Ames, Hail, Pratt, Carnegie, Osterhout, Newberry, and a host of others whose names are yet to be engraved as public benefactors on the tablets of public libraries.

May God speed the work!





## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OF JOSEPH N. LARNED

The need of stronger forces in popular education—the failure of the press—the library's opportunity, as it appeared to a scholarly librarian of the so-called "old school" in 1894.

Joseph Nelson Larned was born in Chatham, Ontario, May 11, 1836, and was educated in the public schools of Buffalo, N. Y. He served on the editorial staff of the Buffalo *Express* in 1859-72, was superintendent of education in Buffalo in 1872-73 and superintendent of the Buffalo Library from 1877 until it became the Public Library in 1897, after which he devoted himself to literature until his death in 1913. His best known work is his *History for Ready Reference and Topical Reading*. He was president of the A. L. A. in 1893-94.

It was my misfortune to be absent from the meeting at which you did me the honor to elect me to this place, and I had no opportunity, either to give my advice against that action, or to thank you for the distinction with which it clothes me. The advice I would have given is now belated; but my thanks have lost no warmth by the delay, and I pray you to accept them with belief in their sincerity. At the same time I shall venture to draw from the circumstances a certain claim upon your generosity. If it happens to me to be tripped in some of these tangles of procedure which, in such meetings as this, await the stumbling feet of an untrained presiding officer, be good enough to remember the warning I would have given you if I had had the opportunity.

We are gathered for the sixteenth meeting of the American

Library Association, in the eighteenth year of its existence. Our league of the libraries is young; its history is unpretentious; but it is the history of a movement of higher importance to the world than many others that have marched with trumpets, and drums. Eighteen years ago, the conception of the Library militant, of the Library as a moving force in the world, of the Librarian as a missionary of literature, was one which a few men only had grasped; but with which those few had already begun the doing of a revolutionary work. To-day such ideals are being realized in most corners of the American republic. The last generation, and the generations before the last, were satisfied with the school as an agent of popular education. In our time we have brought the library to the help of the school, and the world is just opening its eyes to perceive the enormous value of the reinforcement that is gained from this new power.

And the discovery has come none too soon; for a desperate need of more and stronger forces in the work of popular education is pressing on us. If we reflect on the social conditions of the present day, and review a little the working of the ferments in civilized society during a few years last past, we shall marvel, I think, at the timeliness of the movement which brings the public library, just now, to the front of action among the instruments and agencies of popular education. It is our fortune, good or ill as we may regard it, to be unmistakably passing through one of the greater crises of human history. In the last century, modern democracy got its political footing in the world. Its birth was older, and it had been cradled in divers nursing places, Swiss, Dutch, English, and New English; but last century it stepped into political history as the actor of the leading part; as the sovereign of the future, mounting his throne. From the moment it came on the stage, all wise men knew that its need above every other need was education. They made haste, in our country, to build school-houses and to set the school-master at work; seeing plainly that all they might hope for and strive for in the future would depend on the intelligence that could be put into the brain of this omnipotent sovereign who had risen to rule the world.

Well, the schools and the school-masters served their purpose reasonably well for a reason. Democracy was fairly equipped with a spelling-book and a quill-pen for the duties and responsibilities of a simple, slowly-moving time. The mass of

its members, the every-day people of the farm and the shop, read the pamphlets and the weekly gazettes of their day, and were gently drawn, with unconfused minds, into one or the other of two straightly opposed political parties which sought their votes. If they lacked knowledge, there was a certain ingenuousness in their character which paid respect to the opinions of men who had more. If blundering in politics occurred, it was blundering leadership, for the most part, and more easily corrected than perversity in the ranks. So the reign of democracy was successful enough while society kept the simpler state.

But that simpler state is gone. We who are beyond middle age may say that we have seen it disappear. We have witnessed a miraculous transformation of the earth and of the people who dwell on it. We have seen the passing of Aladdin, who rubbed his magical electric lamp as he went calling Afreetes from the air to be the common servants of man. A change has been wrought within fifty years that is measureless, not only in itself, but in its effects on the human race. The people who whisper in each other's ears across a continent; who know at noon-time in Nebraska what happened in the morning at Samarcand; the people to whom a hundred leagues are neighborhood, and a thousand but easy distance; for whom there is little mystery left on the face of the earth, nor anything hidden from their eyes; these people of our day are not in the likeness of the men and women who ambled horseback or rode in coaches from town to town, and who were content with a weekly mail. The fitting and furniture of mind that would make a safe member of society and a good citizen out of the man of small horizons, who lived the narrower life of a generation or two ago, are perilously scant for these times.

It is true that all the wonderful quickening of life which has occurred carries something of education in itself, and that men learn by living under the conditions of the present day; but the learning caught in that way is of the dangerous kind. It is the delusive knowledge of the surface of things; the deceitful lore which breeds mischievous beliefs and makes them fanatical. It goes but a little way, if at all, toward the saving of society, as against the unrest, the discontent, the desire, which torment such an age of revolution as ours.

And the threatening fact is this: that ignorant opinions have acquired at the present day a capacity for harm enormously

increased over that of the elder times. They share the magnified potency that is given to all things, good or ill, by the science of the modern man. Its million tongues are lent to them for propagation; but that is a matter of small seriousness compared with the boundless ease of combination which it offers to them at the same time. It is in that appalling facility of alliance and organization, which present conditions have given to men and women of every class and character, for every kind of aim and purpose, that the greatest peril of society lies in our day. A peril, that is to say, so long as society has no assurance that the leagues and confederacies formed within its bosom will be prevaiingly well instructed and intelligently controlled.

As a serious danger this is something quite new. It has come upon us within recent years. I can remember a state of things in which it was difficult for a man in common life to join himself with other men, much beyond his own neighborhood, in any effectual way, excepting as he did it on the lines of an old political party or an older church. But, to-day, leagues, unions, federations, associations, orders, rings, form themselves among the restless, unstable elements of the time as clouds are formed in the atmosphere, and with kindred lightning flashes and mutterings of thunder. Any boldly ignorant inventor of a new economical theory or a new political doctrine, or a new cornerstone for the fabric of society, can set on foot a movement from Maine to California, between two equinoxes, if he handles his invention with dexterity. This is what invests popular ignorance with terrors which never appeared in it before, and it is this which has brought the real, responsible test of democracy, social and political, on our time and on us.

Democracy, in fact, has remained considerably, hitherto, an unworked theory of society, even in communities which have supposed themselves to be democratically constituted. It has remained so through want of conditions that would give a clear sound to the individual voice and free play to the individual will. Those conditions are now arriving in the world, and the democratic régime is consequently perfecting itself, not politically alone, but economically, and in all the social relations of mankind.

So it is not exaggeration to say that we have come to a situation in which society must fight for its life against popular ignorance. The old agencies of education are inadequate, when

the best has been made of them. The common school does not go far enough, and cannot. Its chief function is to prepare a soil in the young mind for the after seed-planting which will produce fruits of intelligence. Unsupplemented, it is well-nigh barren of true educational results. The higher schools and colleges reach too small a number to count for much in a problem which concerns the teaching of the universal millions. What agency, then, is there, that will prepare the democracy of the present and the future for its tremendous responsibilities?

Some may say, the newspaper press: and I would rejoice if we could accept that reply. For the press is an educating power that might transform the civilization of the world as swiftly in mind and morals as steam and electricity have transformed its material aspects. There is nothing conceivable in the way of light and leading for mankind which a conscientious and cultivated newspaper press might not do within a single generation. But a press of that character and that effect seems possible only under circumstances of disinterestedness which are not likely to exist. The publication of a newspaper may sometimes be undertaken as a duty, but not often. As a rule it is a business, like any other, with the mercenary objects of business; and as a rule, too, the gain sought is more readily and more certainly found by pandering to popular ignorance than by striving against it. A few newspapers can secure a clientage which they please best by dignity, by cleanness, by sober truthfulness, and by thoughtful intelligence, in their columns; but the many are tempted always, not merely to stoop to low tastes and vulgar sentiments, but to cultivate them; because there is gravitation in the moral as well as the physical world, and culture in the downward way is easier than the upward.

The vulgarizing of the news press has been a late and rapid process, nearly coincident in cause and event with the evolution of this modern democracy which it makes more problematical. We need not be very old to have seen the beginnings: the first skimming of the rich daily news of the world for the scum and froth of it; the first invention of that disgusting brew, from public sewers and private drains, with which the popular newspapers of the day feed morbid appetites. We can recall the very routes by which it was carried from city to city, and taken up by journal after journal, as they discovered a latent, un-



developed taste for such ferments of literature in the communities around them. The taste was latent, potential; it did not exist as a fact; it was not conscious of itself; it made no demands. The newspapers deliberately sought it out, delved for it, brought it to the surface, fed it, stimulated it, made it what it is to-day, an appetite as diseased and as shamefully pandered to as the appetite for intoxicating drams.

And, so far as I can perceive, this action and reaction between what is ignorant and vulgar in the public and what is mercenary and unscrupulous in the press will go on until popular education from other sources puts an end to it. For it is the saving fact that there are other sources; and foremost among them are the public libraries. If it has been our privilege to see, and for some in our circle to bear a part in, the beginnings of the active educational work of the libraries, I am persuaded that it is only the beginnings we have witnessed as yet. I am persuaded that the public library of the future will transcend our dreams in its penetrating influence. Consider for a moment what it is, and what it offers to the energies of education which a desperate necessity is awakening and organizing in the world! It is a store, a reservoir, of the new knowledge of the latest day and the ripened wisdom of the long past. To carry into the memory and into the thought of all the people who surround it, in a town, even some little part of what it holds of instructed reasoning and instructed feeling, would be to civilize that community beyond the highest experience of civilization that mankind has yet attained to. There is nothing that stands equally beside it as a possible agent of common culture. It is the one fountain of intellectual life which cannot be exhausted; which need not be channeled for any fortunate few; which can be generously led to the filling of every cup, of every capacity, for old or young. There is little in it to tempt the befouling hand of the politician, and it offers no gain to the mercantile adventurer. For those who serve it on behalf of the public there are few allurements of money or fame. Its vast powers for good are so little exposed to seduction or corruption that it seems to give promises for the future which are safer and surer than any others that society can build hopes upon.

In this view, those who serve the public libraries have a great responsibility laid on them. They hold in their hands what



would give to civilization an ideal refinement if it could be distributed and communicated to all. As we know very well, that is impossible. There is a part of mankind, in every community, which never will feel, never can be made to feel, the gentle attractiveness and influence of books. The fact is one not to be disputed or ignored. At the same time it is a fact to be treated practically as though it did not exist. It is our business to assume that the mission of good books, books of knowledge, books of thought, books of inspiration, books of right feeling, books of wholesome imagination, can be pushed to every hearth, and to every child and parent who sits by it. And it is our business to labor unsparingly toward the making of that assumption good, without reckoning any fraction of hopelessness in it.

That is the business to which we are appointed in this world. Let us be careful that we do not misconceive it in one most important particular! It is not the mission of *books* that we are charged with, but the mission of *good books*. And there lies a delicate, difficult, very grave duty in that discrimination. To judge books with adequate knowledge and sufficient hospitality of mind; to exercise a just choice among them without offensive censorship; to defend his shelves against the endless siege of vulgar literature, and yet not waste his strength in the resistance—these are really the crucial demands made on every librarian.

For the first condition of successful work is a good tool; and our tools are not *books*, but *good books*. These given, then follow those demands on us which we sometimes discuss as though they came first of all: the demands, that is, for a perfected apparatus in the working library, for a tireless energy in its motive forces, and for a large intelligence in the directing of them.

Not many years ago, our missionary undertakings from the library seemed to be bounded by its own walls. The improving, annotating, and popularizing of catalogues; the printing and distributing of bulletins and reference lists; the surrounding of readers and seekers in a library with willing help and competent suggestion; these labors seemed, only a few years ago, to include almost everything that the librarian most zealous as a missionary could do. But see what doors have been opening in the last few years, and what illimitable fields of labor now

invite him! Through one, the great army of the teachers in the common schools is coming into co-operation with him. Through another, he steps into the movement of university extension, and finds in every one of its servants a true apostle of the library mission of good books. From a third, he spreads his beneficent snares about a city in branches and delivery stations; and by a fourth he sends "traveling libraries" to the ends of his State.

The arena of our work is large enough already to make claims on every faculty and power we can bring to it; and yet our plainest duty is to enlarge it still. I think we may be sure that there are portals yet to open, agents yet to enlist, alliances yet to enter, conquests yet to make. And in the end—what?

Those of us who have faith in the future of democracy can only hold our faith fast by believing that the knowledge of the learned, the wisdom of the thoughtful, the conscience of the upright, will some day be common enough to prevail, always, over every factious folly and every mischievous movement that evil minds of ignorance can set astir. When that blessed time of victory shall have come, there will be many to share the glory of it; but none among them will rank rightly before those who have led and inspired the work of the public libraries.

## THE LIBRARY AS AN INSPIRATIONAL FORCE

What a librarian may do to direct the attention of his readers to the really great writers and thinkers—a plea for original work and for innovation in the library—a note frequently heard in 1920, but new in 1899 when Mr. Foss, librarian and popular poet, sounded it in *Public Libraries* for March.

Sam Walter Foss was born in Canadia, N. H., June 19, 1858, graduated at Brown University in 1882 and served on the editorial staff of various papers. In 1895 he left that of the *Boston Globe* and from 1898 to his death, Feb. 26, 1911, he was librarian of the Somerville, Mass., Public Library. He published several volumes of popular verse.

A library has no especial reason for self-felicitation simply because it distributes a large number of books. In fact, it is possible for it to give out a very large number of books and do more harm than good. The test question to ask is: Is it grinding out a product of enlightened and symmetrical men and women? Is it transforming the community into intellectual, thoughtful, better equipped, more roundly developed citizens? Is it making life any ampler, is it making men any manlier, is it making the world any better? If there is any library that cannot answer these questions affirmatively, its librarians are doddering their lives away in useless activity, and receiving a salary without rendering any real service in return. The activities of such a library are useless contortions, and the taxpayers have a right to protest its further existence.

What can a librarian do to make his library an inspirational force? In the first place he must be as accessible as a turnpike road. It seems to me that he can do more good by talking to people than in any other way. To do this, of course, it is a

prerequisite that he should know something. I have no faith in the miserable heresy that a librarian who reads is lost. A librarian who does not read would better not be found in the first place. A librarian who does not read is simply a stable keeper for books. He may see to it that they are well blanketed, groomed, and put in the proper stalls, and that the various implements about his stable are kept in good order; but such a librarian will never be mistaken for an intellectual giant in his community. Let him know the books he handles so that he can talk with schoolgirls about Sophie May and Virginia Townsend, and with boys about Henty and Brooks and Knox and Butterworth. Let him be able to discuss Herbert Spencer and David Harum with equal zest, and know something about Kant and a good deal about Kipling, and venerate Marcus Aurelius, and not despise Mark Twain. His mind should be a live coal in its love for books, and then nestle up to other minds and let them get ignited also.

But it may be said that a librarian hasn't the time for such extensive reading. Did you ever know a boy who couldn't find time to play? One always finds time to do the thing he loves to do; and a man who has a genuine love for reading will find time for it even in a library.

One of the greatest longings that any soul can have is a longing for some one to talk with who is interested in identical subjects.

A librarian, through personal intercourse, can become a powerfully educative influence in his community, and start intellectual impulses that will not subside during his lifetime, but go on widening and blessing indefinitely. Let him become the father confessor of minds in his town or city; the priest of the intellect, to whom all men shall bring all their mental problems, all their dubious enigmas of the brain. He will not be able to solve all their puzzles or untie all their knots; but perhaps he will be able to hold the candle for a little while, while they struggle with the knots themselves. Let him always hold the candle, and talk pleasantly while he is holding it.

This matter of being pleasant in a library is really the first and great commandment. There should be an air of welcome inside that is pleasanter than the sunshine outdoors. The deathlike stillness and tomblike hush, the sepulchral gloom, the graveyard silence that sometimes prevails in libraries, should

not be encouraged. Make people feel at home. The library here can learn a good lesson from the barroom. There are no signs up in a barroom intimating that loud talking is not allowed, nobody walks on tiptoes, everybody is welcomed heartily and encouraged to stay, and men find a sympathetic friendliness there who find it nowhere else. John Wesley said we should not allow the devil to monopolize all the good tunes. The library should not allow the barroom to monopolize all the spirit of human friendliness and good cheer. I am sincerely glad that the old type of librarian is passing out—a man so dignified that children were afraid of him, whose face was so long that his chin dragged on the floor. We want human men with blood in them in a library; men who like men and love children; men who can make themselves agreeable to men, women, children, and dogs. Let us make life as pleasant in a library as a mother's twilight hour with her children, and we shall raise up great families for the afterdays, who shall look back upon us as their intellectual parents, and rise up after we are gone and call our memories blessed.

There are three classes of books—books that give pleasure, books that give information, and books that give inspiration. The first class has its thousands of readers, the second its hundreds, and the third its tens. It is a good thing to read books for pleasure—it is the most innocent kind of drunkenness I know about; but that reading books merely for pleasure may develop into a kind of intellectual dissipation is something that we know from experience; for who is there of us who has not sinned? But reading books merely for pleasure is something we should outgrow in childhood, just as we do stilts and marbles and the game of tag. It is a better thing to read books for information. It is one of the healthiest joys of the normal mind to be forever learning something; forever learning and forever coming to the knowledge of the truth. It is the best thing, however, to read books for inspiration. And this is a class of readers into which many of the frequenters of the public libraries never graduate. Ah! the pity of it! Books that lift us out of ourselves and the fogs and fumes and dust of our little treadmill routines into the ampler ether of loftier altitudes—into the grandeurs of life! Emerson and Shakespeare and Wordsworth and Whitman—do men love such as these and remain little men? No, this is the meat from which giants

are grown; here is the food for souls. Now it seems to me it is the duty of the good librarian, one who believes in the august nature of his profession, to lead up his readers by all devices within his power, by imperceptible gradations, through the books that please and the books that inform, to the books that inspire. And the librarian who drops a boy before he learns to love John Milton has only brought him half his journey, and has dropped him before he has reached the destination to which his fare was paid.

Why do not people read the best books? One reason is they never see them. It is a librarian's business to keep them in sight, his next business is to read them himself, and his next business is to talk about them whenever he can get an audience of fifty, or five, or one; to write about them in his monthly bulletins and let every man know he can get them, and welcome, by stretching out his hand. We all know how Tom Sawyer got his fence painted. He made all the boys in his neighborhood believe that fence painting was great fun. The librarian should make all the boys in his neighborhood believe that reading the best books is genuine pleasure. They can be brought to an appreciation of this pleasure as one is brought to the height of a tableland of a great continent, by gradations so gradual that they seem to be walking on a flat surface.

I believe that the great destiny of the public library is as yet but faintly foreseen. The plain truth is that the library has not tried yet to do its best. It has opened its doors and let people come in, if they so desire, or if they happen to be passing that way. No successful auctioneer does business according to any such method. On the contrary he lifts up his voice to all it may concern, and to all that do not care that there are about to be great bargains at his place. The business man who opens his store and then forever holds his peace has his solitude very infrequently interrupted by customers. The church that has no missionary spirit is as tepid as the old church of Laodicea. The schoolmaster whose pupils absent themselves too frequently collects his daily audience, even if he has to call in the services of the truant officer. All this is written with something of the same wisdom. I do not believe it should always wait for people to come to it; it should go to the people. Every family in every city or town where there is a library



should be offered a library card, or as many cards as it has adult members. Sometimes there is so much red tape prerequisite to obtaining a library card that a bashful man does not dare to make the attempt. Let us not shut the people off from the books that they have paid for by a barbed wire fence of red tape. Let every man or woman, yes, or child, too, that is old enough, be personally canvassed and offered a library card. Then sell him a catalog at cost price, or better still, at less than cost, and tell him how to use it. Ah, but our trustees will say, this will cost something. Yes, it will cost something, but it will be a tremendously profitable investment, and pay immense dividends later on in a more intelligent citizenship and wiser and happier men.

From all this I wish it might be inferred that no librarian can be too great for his position. It is not easy for him to have too much knowledge, too much tact, too much consecration to his work, too exalted an estimate of his possibilities. He should not have a mind with a flange on it, so that it forever runs on the small rail along the dusty roadbeds of routine. Let him originate, let him innovate, let him blaze his path with the pioneers—let him think.



## THE USE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Part of an address by President Angell of the University of Michigan—educator, diplomat and statesman—at the dedication of the Ryerson Library Building in Grand Rapids, Mich., Oct. 8, 1904. To advise a reader, Pres. Angell thinks, one must know something of his personal aptitudes. General advice about “good reading” is seldom of great service. A modern note by a great man.

James Burrill Angell was born in Scituate, R. I., Jan. 7, 1829, graduated at Brown University, and after studying abroad, became eminent as an educator, holding first a professorship in his alma mater and then serving successively as president of the Universities of Vermont and Michigan. He was U. S. minister to China in 1880-81 and served on important international commissions. His works on international law and on education are standard. He died on April 1, 1916.

Now that your benefactor has so nobly done his part, it remains for the city to see that the library is maintained and managed in an effective manner. It would not only be an act of ingratitude, but it would be a mockery, if in such an edifice as this we should not find a good and growing and well administered library. There is no more important commission in your city than the commission charged with the care of your library. Let us hope that they will always be chosen with special regard to their fitness for their official duty and without regard to their party affiliations.

Especially is wisdom needed in the selection of your books. It is not so difficult to choose books for the cultivated and scholarly readers. But in a city library you must provide for

all your population. Particular care should be had to procure books attractive and useful to your artisans and mechanics and common laborers. They should be led to feel that this is the place where they can most profitably spend a spare hour and can find something to bring new brightness into their monotonous lives. The efforts which you have already initiated to make the library serviceable to the pupils in your schools must now be redoubled. The teachers and the library authorities must always contrive to cooperate heartily. The multiplication of libraries in this country has already elevated the work of the librarian to the dignity of a distinct profession. And no profession promises to be more useful. In addition to the proper organization and care of the library, the influence which a competent librarian can wield in his guidance of the reading and studies of the young is seldom outweighed by that of the teacher or the preacher. In no manner can a generous appropriation of funds for the support of a library be more wisely expended than in securing a competent librarian.

Judging by my own experience and by my observation of others, I doubt whether the guide books which have been written to tell one what works to read have been of great service. The simple reason why they are not very helpful is that to advise one what to read, you should know something of his aptitudes and taste and something of his plans of life. General advice is a shot in the air. It may hit nothing.

But a competent person may give helpful counsels to the young concerning useful methods of reading whatever one does read, and may indeed specify what are some of the best books on certain topics. A good librarian, if leisure enough is left him, may attract and help willing auditors by occasional lectures or informal talks on how to read in a library. But personal suggestions, to meet particular needs, are the most fruitful of good. And just here the school teachers, if competent to advise, can be of the utmost service. In no way can the library be made so valuable as by the hearty and systematic co-operation of the librarian and the teachers. It would be very useful if they could from time to time meet to confer upon the best methods of securing harmonious action. For it is the generation now coming on to the stage who are chiefly to profit by the use of this library. It is through them that the city is to receive its chief benefit. To incite them to read, to train them

to right habits of reading, to inspire them with high ideals of what one should seek and love in reading, should be the aspiration of parents and teachers, if this library is to yield its largest harvest of good.

Like all good things, this library may to some persons bring no good; it may even be made an instrument of harm. It may bring no good, because it may be utterly neglected. No doubt there are many families who have never drawn a book from its shelves. It may bring no good, it may even cause intellectual, not to say moral injury, if it is misused. It is possible to choose from any great library such passages from works and to peruse them in such a spirit as to gratify and stimulate prurient desires, or if one does not descend to so unworthy and shameful an act, one may read in such a manner as to be guilty of intellectual dissipation. What we may call the desultory readers are exposed to this danger. They pick up whatever book or magazine comes first to hand, provided they are sure that it makes no tax upon their mental powers. They spend their time dawdling over a chapter of this book, then over a chapter of that, as men of the town now join this gay companion for an hour and then another for the next hour for frivolous talk and profitless gossip, and so wander aimless through the day without any fruitage to show for their time. They lose the power, if they ever had it, of consecutive study and thought and discourse on any theme whatever.

I do not mean to intimate that we should never come to this library to read for pleasure and entertainment. One of the great and proper uses of books is to refresh and amuse us in our hours of weariness and depression. Like the society of our choicest friends, they may wisely be sought for the sole purpose of diverting our minds from the flood of cares and troubles which come in upon all of us. The library may well be

"The world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil."  
Or in our happy and merry moods we may seek congenial company in the creations of Cervantes and Moliere and Shakespeare and Dickens and Mark Twain. Reading for pastime is a commendable occupation, if wisely followed. Lowell in his paradoxical style tells us that what Dr. Johnson called browsing in a library is the only way in which time can be profitably wasted. But to browse profitably one should have an appetite only for what has some merit. I have known lads born with

a literary instinct as unerring as that of the bee for finding honey, to have the free run of a large library and come out with a wonderful range of good learning. Such instances show the unwisdom of having the same rules to guide every one in his reading. In such cases as those just cited, the example and taste of the parents often determine the success of the experiment. The books they talk about fondly at table and quote from freely and appositely are likely to arrest the attention of the child. Therefore we may say that the home as truly as the school may largely determine what advantage shall be gained in this library. Parents who for their children's sake are careful what guests they admit to their house and what companionships they counsel the children to form may well consider what reading comes under their roof and what literary tastes they encourage in their household.

In these days when reviews and magazines and school histories of literature abound, there seems ground for one caution to youthful readers. It is, not to be content with reading about great books and great men, but to study the works themselves of great men. Many of the outlines of English literature, for example, which pupils in school are required to study, contain dates and names and brief descriptions of masterpieces, and from the nature of the case can contain little else. But cramming the memory with these is not learning the literature. Reading, mastering, and learning to appreciate and love the great works of a great author is better than to learn the dry facts in the lives of a score of authors. So our magazines and reviews treat us to criticism sometimes wise, sometimes unwise, of many authors. But all these are of little value until the works themselves of the authors have been studied. With the works the biographies of the authors should be read in order to appreciate the conditions under which the works were produced. But far better is it to gain a thorough acquaintance with one great writer's life and works than to learn a few fragmentary facts at second hand about the lives and writings of many.

One of the most difficult questions to settle in these days in the selection of books for a library or in directing the reading of the young is, how large shall be the proportion of fiction in a library or in the reading of any one. Just now we are flooded with fiction, stretching from the short story of the magazine



to the two-volume novel. I observe that nearly two-thirds of the volumes drawn from this library in 1901-02 are classed under the two heads of juvenile fiction and fiction. And I suppose the experience of other popular libraries is similar to yours. This shows at least that there is a great craving for fiction. That craving a library like this must to a fair degree strive to meet. Nor need we regret that there is a strong desire for sterling works of fiction. They stimulate and nourish the imagination. They give us vivid pictures of life. They portray for us the working of human passions. They give a reality to history. Sometimes they cultivate a taste for reading in those who would otherwise be inclined to read little, and so lead them to other branches of literature. But, on the other hand, I think it must be confessed that a great deal of the fiction which is deluging the market is the veriest trash, or worse than trash. Much of it is positively bad in its influence. It awakens morbid passions. It deals in most exaggerated representations of life. It is vicious in style.

It is a most delicate task for the authorities of a library like this to draw the line between the works of fiction which should be and those which should not be found on its shelves. As to the individual reader, the best we can do is to elevate his taste as rapidly as we can by placing in his hands fiction attractive at once in its matter and in its style. We must hope that with the cultivation of taste to which our best schools aspire, we can rear a generation which will prefer the best things in literature to the inferior. That is the reason why the teachers of languages and literature in our schools should be not mere linguists, but persons of refined literary taste, who will imbue their pupils with a love for the truest and highest in every literature which they can read.

I would like to commend to my young friends who desire to profit by the use of this library the habit of reading with some system and of making brief notes upon the contents of the books they read. If, for instance, you are studying the history of some period, ascertain what works you need to study and finish such parts of them as concern your theme. Do not feel obliged to read the whole of a large treatise, but select such chapters as touch on the subject in hand, and omit the rest for the time. Young students often get swamped and lose their way in Serbonian bogs of learning, when they need to explore only a

simple and plain pathway to a specific destination. Have a purpose and a plan and adhere to it in spite of alluring temptations to turn aside into attractive fields that are remote from your subject. If in a note book you will on finishing a work jot down the points of importance in the volume and the references to the page or chapter, you will frequently find it of the greatest service to run over these notes and refresh your memory. If you are disposed to add some words of comment or criticism on the book, that practice also will make you a more attractive reader, and will make an interesting record for you to consult.

## COMMUNITY CENTER SERVICE

This is the newest phase of library work and the most convincing evidence of its socialization. There is little in print about its early stages; its classics are still in the making. We quote only three papers here.



## THE LIBRARY AS A SOCIAL CENTRE

The opening address at the Red Wing meeting of the Minnesota Library Association, Oct. 12, 1905, by Miss Countryman, librarian of the Minneapolis Public Library. The "public," Miss Countryman thinks, "is no indefinite, intangible somebody; it is just 'we' "—the statement of library socialization in a nutshell.

Gratia Alta Countryman was born at Hastings, Minn., in November, 1866, and graduated, with the B.S. degree, at the University of Minnesota in 1889. In that same year she entered the service of the Minneapolis Public Library, and she was assistant librarian at the resignation of Dr. James K. Hosmer in 1904, succeeding him as librarian.

During these latter days of enormous library activity, we have been conscientiously examining the functions of a library; we have been trying all sorts of methods to popularize it, to advertise it. We have asked for and listened to the criticism of outsiders, and by the light thrown upon it through this prism have separated our work into its elemental parts and seen its various hues.

We used to erect a library as an altar to the gods of learning; now, to use Mr. Dana's words, we erect it as an altar to the "gods of good fellowship, joy and learning." So you see, our ideals are constantly rising, our horizons ever broadening, and our work continually increasing, both in extent and in depth. We might well have considered our hands fairly full to have dealt alone with this god of learning, but we find ourselves embracing the opportunity for additional service to the gods of good fellowship and joy.

It might do us good to consider tonight what we are doing for the cause of learning, what the library has done to increase

serious reading and study, and how it may further the educational work of the world. This question is ever present with us, and can stand any amount of discussion. But it is the gods of good fellowship and joy that we are discussing tonight, the library not as a center of learning but as a social center.

We are dealing with a small crowd of people whom we call "our public." Who are the public? Why, you and I, and my family, and others just like us. They want just the same things that we do, and to be accommodated in just the same way that we do. The public is no indefinite, intangible somebody, it is just "we."

We talk about the people being hungry for books and information. Have you found it so? Then why do we have free libraries and free schools? People are willing to sacrifice for something that they are very hungry for. Do you hunger and thirst to read Homer and Shakespeare, and Emerson and Arnold, and good histories and literature? Do you, when you are tired after a day's work, take home a scientific work or a treatise on civics? No, you are just a little sample of the public, and you think you need to read a pleasant, entertaining, restful book. You aren't hungry for information, and, as a matter of fact, the person who delights in study and has a fine taste for the best in literature has one of the "gifts extremely rare." Most of us are practical, everyday, working people, with a very limited time for reading, and this public whom we serve is just like us. A few of them will love to read the best, many of them will want information at intervals, a large proportion want recreative reading, and the vast majority use the library not at all. Now the former, who want and love the library, you need not be troubled about. They will naturally come to the library, and you will find pleasure in serving them. But these latter classes who either come for pleasure or come not at all must be drawn and held through the social instincts, and through their desire for pleasure. Every human being must have social life. We seek company and companionship with whom we can find mutual pleasure. We may find it in friendly gatherings, social clubs, or music or conversation or games, but social pleasure of some sort is sought by all of us, great and small, in town and country alike. In the city there is usually plenty of opportunity—I might almost say that there is a surfeit—and one must pick and choose. But in the towns and vil-



lages it is often different; good amusement and profitable pleasures are not always to be had, and being social beings, the social craving is satisfied with whatever means may be at hand. Young people especially can not isolate themselves, or live unto themselves. Just where is the library going to stand in this matter? Is there anything which we can do to satisfy these natural desires and to enter more vitally into the lives of the people? This is the question to take home and think about.

As individuals, we are coming to have an enormous interest in other human lives, there is a sense of social obligation upon us; we have come to know that personal righteousness is not all that is required of us, but that we must help to realize the social righteousness. The library has the duty of being all things to all men. It is no longer simply a repository of books, it is exactly what Mr. Carnegie calls it, the cradle of democracy, filled with the democratic spirit, and it endeavors, as far as circumstances permit, to minister to all the needs of the community in which it dwells. The library stands for progress, the progress of its town, and this does not mean increasing the material prosperity of the people, though that may follow, but it chiefly means the raising of the moral, social and intellectual standards of all its people, and helping men and women to be more effective in every way. The library does not exist for one side only of the life of the people, but for every side, and if it fails to provide for those who seek amusement, it shirks a duty and renounces a privilege. The sooner we unveil the "gods of joy and good fellowship" in our library the better; the sooner we make the library a centre for all the activities among us that make for social efficiency the better.

Of course there are natural limitations to the kind of work which a library can do, and in helping to further the spirit of good fellowship and to furnish pleasure, we must keep within such limits as are consistent with the spirit of a library. The library can appeal to people in other ways than by books alone, as we shall consider later, yet as books are our chief tools, it is natural to think first of giving pleasure by that method. One of our chiefest ways of late years has been through the children's room. The children get book instruction and supplementary reading and enforced book interests, all of which are needed for their development, in the schoolroom. But in the children's room at the library furnished especially for them, with low

tables, picture books and low shelves containing fairy stories and all their favorite authors, they settle down to satisfy their own especial individual tastes. Then there is the story hour, of which we shall hear to-morrow. Many of the children have never learned the pleasure of reading. They do not belong to cultured homes and the presence of books. Many of them never heard a Mother Goose jingle or a nonsense verse, and a book is an unlearned delight. But what child, even of this kind, does not love to hear stories, and listening breathlessly, would not come again and again. Somehow it seems as if we could not discharge our social obligation until we had gone into the by-ways and hedges and gathered in these scraps of society, and taught them the pleasures of a book. The children, once acquainted with the library, will always count it among their friends, and it will forever remain a social centre to them.

We grown ups are not so different from the children; we, too, like a story, and we, too, want to read the things that cheer and entertain us. We agreed a moment ago that we, as well as our public, were liable to leave the serious books for the infrequent study hour and to spend our leisure evenings with the fascinating novel. Well, I do not know of any better way to give amusement and pleasure than to furnish the people with the books they want, in which they can be interested and absorbed. The "cares that infest the day" will fold their wings better under the spell of a good story than any other way. I think we need not be frightened when libraries are accused of being only fiction distributors, for it is a library's function to amuse as well as to instruct, and if people will seek amusement through the library, so much the better for the people. It is natural that the people should feel a curiosity about the newest book and want to read what other people are talking about. This adds also to pleasant social intercourse, and gives people a common subject of conversation. Fiction is bound to be more and more an interpretation of life by which we see the motives and the currents in other souls. We need not be afraid to supply good, wholesome fiction and to use it in establishing social relations with our people, so that the adults as well as the children shall feel a real pleasure in coming to the library.

Many of our libraries are now housed in beautiful buildings, in which case, the building as well as the books becomes a

means of social influence. If there is need of a home for social intercourse and amusement, the library may legitimately attempt to furnish such a home within its walls. If there are social or study clubs, organized labor guilds or missionary societies, or any other organizations, encourage them to meet at the library, find out what they need, let them find out that the library is their cooperative partner. And so with the schools and industries, of which I have not time to speak. The whole building at all times should be managed in the broadest spirit of hospitality; the atmosphere should be as gracious, kindly and sympathetic as one's own home. Then do away with all unnecessary restrictions, take down all the bars, and try to put face to face our friends the books and our friends the people. Introduce them cordially, then stand aside and let them make each other's blessed acquaintance.

Some have tried smoking rooms, had boy's club rooms and games, and many have tried simply to make the rooms homelike and cheery, and all of their experience is valuable to us.

It may be that no one of the plans used by other libraries may fit your case, for it is not necessarily good for you because some one else has used it successfully. But with any plan do not expect immediate results, for almost everything that succeeds permanently has a slow, gradual development; that which flashes up quickly usually dies down suddenly. Be willing to work out a good plan if you have one, and be willing to study your people and all of their interests before you shape your plans.



## THE LIBRARY AND THE SOCIAL CENTRE

By a great expert in library field-work as done by one of our most active library commissions. Miss Lutie E. Stearns, of whom a sketch will be found in Vol. I. of this series, is now a lecturer at large, but at the writing of this paper, which is reprinted from *The Wisconsin Library Bulletin* for May, 1911, she was in the service of the Library Commission of that state.

It is coming to be an axiom in library economy that "the worth of a book is in its use." For this reason, librarians everywhere are devoting themselves to what is called "library extension" through the building of branches, and the establishment of deposit stations in schools, factories, stores, club-houses, police stations, fire-engine houses, etc. Experience has shown that where no efforts are made along the line of library extension only 10 per cent. or at the most 20 per cent. of the people are reached in any given community. If we wish to have wholesome literature become "the burden of the common thought" we must place good books within easy reach of all. Libraries should be quick to realize that the social centre offers a most excellent opportunity to reach those that might not otherwise take the time to avail themselves of library privileges. The free public library should therefore be made an important part of social centre work through active and sympathetic co-operation.

Where libraries can afford proper facilities, there is no reason why the library building should not serve as the social centre for the community, as this institution differs from the schoolhouse, in cities where parochial schools exist, in being neutral on the religious question and therefore acceptable to all denominations. Wherever the social centre may be, whether in library building or schoolhouse, strong emphasis should be placed on the use of books. A special librarian, of

peculiar fitness, should be appointed either by the library or the social centre authorities. This man or woman should be earnestly altruistic in his or her desire to fit the right book to the right person at the right time. It may be that this will mean the issuance of a primer in English to an adult Slav who has recently arrived in this country, or it may be the loan of a novel more wholesome in tone though just as sentimental as one by Bertha M. Clay, the author requested. Again, the leader of the boy gang may be persuaded to give up the reading of the lurid "nickel library" in favor of Custer and Grinnell's truthful Indian experiences. Such selection involves a wide range of books in the social centre library, from well-bound and attractive editions of the classics down to the latest, most wholesome novel. The boys that frequent the gymnasium may be won by Barbour's latest football story. The raffia worker should find interest in Priestman's Handicrafts. An up-to-date and authoritative encyclopedia, a good dictionary, a World almanac, and other popular reference books should be supplied and instruction given in their use. Debating material should be sought and every inducement offered for individual research.

Those who cannot afford to take correspondence courses in the various trades and crafts should find material in the social centre library for self-education. James Russell Lowell has said that the best part of every man's education is that which he gives himself, and it is for this that the library at the social centre should furnish the opportunity and the means. Again, there should be books of a cheerful sort for tired workers so that, as in William Morris's *Earthly Paradise*, they may

"Forget six counties overhung with smoke,

Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke."

Wholesome novels should be found in plenty for both men and women, together with books that inspire with courage for life's daily round, such as Hugh Black's *Work*, Gannett's *Blessed be drudgery*, Hyde's *Art of optimism*, Emerson's *Character and heroism*, and Wagner's *Courage*. Each book in the library's collection should serve one or all three purposes—to inform, to inspire, or to refresh.

The rules for the issuance of books should be made as simple as possible. Borrowers should not be restricted to one book at a time if more can be used; that is, a novel should be loaned



with a book for study. No guarantee should be required except the borrower's signature.

A reading room should be made an attractive feature in connection with the issuance of books. The library and reading room should be well lighted and heated, and order and quiet should be insisted upon. The reading table should be supplied with an abundance of the best of the popular magazines. The *Technical World*, *Popular mechanics*, *Amateur work*, and the *Scientific American*, will be found to be strong magnets for attracting the interest of the boys and young men. The *World's work*, *Collier's weekly*, and the *American magazine*, are the three great exponents of optimism in our national life which should find a place on the reading room tables, as should *McClure's*, *Everybody's*, *Hampton's*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Century*, and the *Atlantic*. In the small towns the local paper and one or two of the near-by metropolitan dailies should also be taken.

Attractive libraries and reading rooms make less attractive the seductions of other places. George Eliot said long ago, "Important as it is to direct the industries of men, it is not so important as to wisely direct their leisure." It is indeed true, as a critic of our national life has said, that "The use of a nation's leisure is the test of its civilization." To win people to a love of good literature, to bring back the old days of reading and meditation, are two of the great problems that confront the present-day librarian. In the words of one earnest library worker, "The modern library movement is a movement to increase by every possible means the accessibility of books, to stimulate their reading and to create a demand for the best. Its motive is helpfulness; its scope, instruction and recreation; its purpose, the enlightenment of all; its aspiration, still greater usefulness."



## WHERE NEIGHBORS MEET

Extracts from a special report on the social work of the St. Louis Public Library made in 1917 by Margery Quigley, then librarian of its Divoll Branch.

Margery Closey Quigley was born in Los Angeles, Cal., Sept. 16, 1886, and graduated from Vassar College. She entered the service of the St. Louis Public Library in February, 1909, studied at the New York State Library School in 1914-15, and in August, 1918, became librarian of the Free Library in Endicott, N. Y.

The experience of the St. Louis Public Library goes to prove that no matter what the neighborhood may be, and however well-supplied it already is with meeting places, there is always room for the library auditorium and club rooms without subtracting in any way from the business of the other agencies. In fact, they seem to increase each other's use.

Of our six branch buildings, one is located in the heart of the older ghetto, one in Carondelet, two in purely residential neighborhoods, one at the Soulard civic center, where nine or ten European languages are represented, and the sixth in the older German section of the north side, near the river.

About each branch is the full quota of meeting places required by any given neighborhood—moving-picture houses, community halls to let for dances and entertainments, churches, saloons, Turnvereins, settlements, club houses, running the gamut from "lid clubs" to the Artists' Guild, Masonic temples and public schools, which are now managed on the community-center plan. Several of the branches have all these within a radius of five or six blocks, and still they must show the "standing-room-only" sign to many of the clubs that apply for the use of the library halls.

The remarkable feature of this wider use of the library is that in spite of the increase of meetings, there has been no

spirit of competition. Between the community halls and the library, for example, there has been no rivalry for statistics of use. Cabanne branch, in the heart of perfectly equipped institutions which foster all sorts of clubs, shows more than 52 meetings a month during the last nine months, while our report of 1907 said of this branch: "There has been an average of nearly six meetings a month in the building."

Neighborhood clubs meet in the halls which best suit their purposes, and no agency seeks to move any one of them to a different roof. In the Crunden Branch neighborhood, the Socialists meet in a synagogue and a Yiddish church meets in the library.

The city recreation department reports that the library's work and the department's community work at the Patrick Henry School and on the playgrounds, far from duplicating one another are supplementary.

In giving the free use of its meeting-rooms to any reputable group of persons, the St. Louis Public Library acts upon two principles which it cannot emphasize strongly enough. They are the same on which it buys its books; first, that the library stands for no propaganda but seeks to house all opinions, and second, that it makes no obvious attempt to reform or "uplift."

Although the books it buys must meet a certain standard in style and content, the day is past when library assistants seek to force down readers' throats books which "will be good" for them. In the same way, the meeting which it shelters must meet the standards of the community; but the Library has ceased to initiate or direct clubs and meetings, cultural or otherwise.

Community work can be successful only when it embodies the spontaneous expression of the neighborhood's own demand, whether it is from children, or women, or men. A chain of suffrage groups was successful, if numbers were an indication, in one neighborhood and a failure in another—from the same cause. In a neighborhood of illiterate foreign women with large families, one suffragist lecturer on the common law of England was greeted by an audience consisting of one deaf old lady and fifty Jewish children under twelve, who had heard that candy was to be given away.

Many of the meetings that wither and die are conceived in the finest spirit of service. If they aim to interest the whole

neighborhood, irrespective of cliques and prejudices, they almost always fail—if, as we Americans are supposed to do, we figure failure and success in terms of quantity. Utopian schemes cannot long survive to-day, housed or not in the scholarly and friendly surroundings of the library. A united Ukraine cannot absorb the attention of its supporters half as continuously as the possibility of a new job in Ford's factory, and a "decent dancing club" cannot always endure in the face of profits to be made from a river excursion.

Probably of all municipal institutions, the library, while maintaining its dignified and quiet atmosphere, may become the least formal and most neighborly. It is a library truism that a librarian can tell from repeated experiences just when a borrower is calling at the library to announce her engagement or to proclaim that his new job has been secured. Countless other bits of everyday news are exchanged over the desk with real profit to the library and to the visitor. We feel in St. Louis that the so-called wider use of the plant is only a tangible expression of this same friendly relationship, justified on the one hand by its economy and on the other, and to a far larger extent, by its contribution to the community's legitimate social life.

Very fortunately for the tax-payer, and for the average reader, the public library does not look upon its branches as intellectual clinics for the poor. Like the public schools, its problem is to serve "all the children of all the people," and consequently in localities other than those where foreigners live, the same sort of branch building is erected, with an auditorium open under the same regulations and used to meet the needs of the particular neighborhood. The so-called "middle class" has as fair a chance and as "good a time" in the library auditoriums as the foreign poor.

When there are public meetings at the Carondelet library, speakers from other parts of the city invariably come late. They begin their addresses with long apologies, saying that they have never been in the neighborhood before, and did not know where to find the library. They always seem amazed at the size and beauty of the building, and comment particularly on the pleasant club-rooms. One West End woman could not say enough in praise of everything, repeating continually, "and all this down here!"

Practically this same comment is made again and again in the main library, and in the other branches throughout the city. "All this down here," is equally true of seven auditoriums, each with a seating capacity of 200, and of club rooms and offices to the number of fifteen. In these halls were held, during the past year, practically as large a number of meetings as our equipment will permit. Omitting the meetings at Crunden and Soulard, practically all are held by the average sort of person—average financially, socially and intellectually. The very absence of the feeling that the club must make money, or must at least pay expenses, probably accounts for the long list of small clubs and board meetings which could almost as easily meet in the homes of members.

There are those who think that no one uses the auditoriums except very wealthy club-women, who set up Christmas trees for the poor. There is no more truth in this than there would be in saying that all the inhabitants of St. Louis are either immigrants or millionaires. In the total number of meetings at the library, what Ida Tarbell has termed "the shirtwaist crowd," is far in the majority. At practically every branch, the Simon-pure woman's clubs form at least fifteen per cent. of all the meetings. At the Cabanne branch, about fifty per cent. are made up of women. The Barr Branch Mothers' Circle, The Queen Hedwig Polish Women, and the Carondelet Women's Club are three names out of a list running almost to a hundred.

The masculine of "shirtwaist crowd" is "shirtsleeves crowd"; and this is equally well represented upon the schedules of all the branches. Miss Griggs, of the Barr Branch, writes:

"We seem now to have a number of new meetings that are held for discussion—but not many for study—casual, one-meeting-only affairs. For instance, the Royal Arcanum met to discuss what could be done about the increased rates. All the premiums were raised and those for older men raised far out of reason, so all the older members had a meeting down here, to discuss what action they could take. I am glad people come casually that way—and feel that we are open for something beside the regular study meetings. They sit around very informally, smoke, come in and out down stairs and do not have any very formal session.

"In common with the other branches, Barr has had political meetings. Some have been held just before elections and have



been quite warm. On one occasion, the library was made a buzzing community center by a series of bombs that were set off in the street. Other and quieter meetings have been held by party committees, judges of elections and the like. The State Socialist party has twice held its conventions here, and each time the session lasted for four days. The meetings were opened with hymns, and the delegates had all-day sessions, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. I think most of the partisan leaders feel that they are a little handicapped when they meet in the library—still, they come back occasionally.

"There are coming to be more purely social meetings of younger grade pupils. In some cases, these children are not organized, but merely claim to be in order to get the halls. In other cases, relatives who come with them to make application are frank to confess that they want the hall to avoid inconvenience at home, especially the protracted house-cleanings which are the pre-requisite at most home parties. One mother said that the last time there was a birthday party in her house, the man who lived upstairs, after rapping repeatedly on the floor to stop the children's noise, came down and said, that 'the party would simply have to bust up.' She wanted to hold this party in the library, because her husband had such a bad temper, that she was sure he would murder the man if such a thing happened again, and, of course, it *would* happen again, for no children's party would ever be quiet enough to suit the man upstairs.

"Adult clubs as a whole ask very little of us beyond the occasional use of the telephone, and they often come and go without our being conscious of them. This is especially true of day-time meetings. It must be admitted, that in addition to those who are very friendly and those who do not make either criticism or appreciation articulate, there are some who break the monotony of the librarian's existence by thinking 'they own the place,' to quote the janitor. The younger social meetings need considerable attention, too. They overflow upstairs, are always noisy and sometimes not as agreeable as they should be. A member of a new club of girls said, 'I guess we rented this building for the evening—we can make as much noise as we please.'"

Within certain limits, particularly the powder-cans and lead pencils of the staff, we want the clubs to think that they do

own the place. The surest proof that the St. Louis plan works, is to have the scions of our democracy feel that they are getting their money's worth from the institution that their taxes support.

A group of young socialists was formed too late in the season to secure a regular meeting night. They finally decided that they would have to be satisfied with meeting, for the winter, at K——'s—a delicatessen store a few blocks away. K——'s has an advertisement every week in the Jewish Record, inviting men to come and read the papers there and make use of the free meeting-room. Like all Jewish delicatessens, this shop contains everything that any patron is willing to buy, and in addition, elaborates the coffee-house idea into any shape that circumstances may suggest. When the young men said individually on later occasions that they were not contented at the delicatessen, they always added, "It's because we feel so at home at the library; because we've always gotten books out there." The next winter their application was handed in several months in advance.

In a neighborhood where conditions are the exact antithesis of Crunden's, the same feeling exists. Miss Pretlow was talking one evening to a young man who belonged to a group giving a dancing party at Cabanne Library. She said that she could not but remark how well-dressed and well bred and altogether prosperous the dancers were. They very evidently could have met in any one of a number of large homes or could have paid for one of the best halls in the city; so she said to the young man, "How is it you do not rent Blank's Hall, but use the Library instead? I know it can't be the difference in cost that influences you." The young man answered in very evident astonishment: "Why, we like this place; we all grew up in this Library."

When adolescents of both sexes meet together, their meetings are purely for a good time. Their behavior is extremely immature from the social side; either very wooden or very uncontrolled. This is the period when the librarian must insist upon strict chaperonage, and it is also the period when resentment of discipline, or even of suggestion, runs high. They would no more follow the advice of the Librarian in the matter of invitations, introduction of wall-flowers and how a dance is to be "run off" generally, than they would copy her taste in dress, which they invariably consider very "old-maidy." The

standards to which social clubs adhere rigidly are those observed in places of commercialized amusement. One group of boys met to teach each other dancing, where the girls would not see them. As it was a case of the blind leading the blind, a volunteer who had been teaching folk-dancing to the girls all winter, offered her services. After one trial she was *persona non grata*, because she wouldn't let them "rag."

Some of the dances are quite grim. One will not hear a note of laughter all the evening. Five or six girls will often come together. Those who know boys will dance with them, and between dances will not make the slightest effort to introduce their friends to possible partners. The friends, instead of resenting this inactivity, often sit all the evening on the side lines watching and chewing gum, apparently perfectly satisfied.

At the opposite pole is the wild desire for "rough house." In the early stages of auditorium work and before these days of H. C. L., pieces of cake have occasionally gone flying across the hall.

As soon as branch libraries recognized these facts, and it was very soon, the application for dances became fewer and of better quality. Leavings from other club rooms no longer apply, and disgruntled alumni associations in schools have ceased to contemplate a move to the nearest branch library.

No effort has been made to advertise the club rooms, beyond these statements of the branch librarians in passing, except the exhibiting of the rooms themselves to visitors who "stop in to show our library to cousin Sarah, from Davenport," or Illinois, or Oklahoma, as the case may be. Word-of-mouth publicity accounts for the gradual steady growth in the use of the rooms. One of the many examples began with a stenographer who sewed, "in secret," as she said, at noon in the club room. She was embroidering an engagement present for one of the girls in her office. Needless to say, she scattered information about the rooms, and the rules governing them, wherever any one would listen. Eventually a Sunday School class, to which her cousin belonged, gave a St. Patrick's Day party in the library. As an indirect result, a School Patron's Association now holds five or six meetings each Spring, to make preparations for its annual picnic. So the ball of publicity rolls along of its own momentum.

At branch libraries, the auditorium and study rooms are as a rule closely connected architecturally with the reading rooms, and club members usually pass through the main part of the library to reach the meetings. One or two at least from each group stop to chat with the workers, or to read. At Crunden the assistants say that whenever a Yiddish meeting is to begin at nine, the men come at eight and read. Then there are the isolated individuals from the club who stumble on the resources of the library quite by accident, and later grow communicative. Occasionally some one rushes up stairs to borrow the telephone book, and when, after an unsuccessful quest, he is offered the city directory by the librarian, he finds it hard to realize that any library can contain a book as useful as that. One man who saw a magazine lying on the desk while he was asking to be directed to the auditorium, said, "I had no idea the library handled magazines."

Libraries try as faithfully to reach every one as if they were commercial enterprises, but there will always be a certain number of persons who have never been in a library building, not to speak of knowing the location of the nearest branch and realizing its resources. A Harvard graduate said he had walked past a branch every day for a year and had thought it was a branch post-office. If there were no other arguments in favor of adding auditoriums to the library's list of activities, there is this: that they introduce to the library large groups of people who have had no connection with it before. The horse at least has been led to the water.

If clubs meet regularly, there is always a small proportion who make meeting-night their library night. They consequently read and want to calculate all fines with reference to the night of the last meeting. I once heard one young woman telling another how she finally had her reading "doped out into a system," by beginning on her seven-day book just as soon as she reached home after the meeting, and using the fourteen-day book only on the street cars.

With the establishment of libraries in small towns and rural communities, there is at present a tendency to make social centers out of library buildings, even at the sacrifice of the books, rather than to establish libraries in connection with social activities. This is also true in those cities where "field-houses" in parks are well developed. Without holding a brief

for either school, we may properly emphasize three principles. The first is that a librarian holds her position by virtue of being a librarian, and that her duty and training require her full time for the purpose for which she is employed—the fitting of the proper book to the individual. The second is that if the community needs to have the social center stressed more than the books, a social worker must direct the center and the librarian must contribute in a subordinate capacity to make the center a success. For example, the St. Louis Public Library has equipped a room with books and is furnishing an attendant at a colored social center in a church building at Garrison and Lucas Avenues, but it does not thereby put forward any claim to control and stimulate the social activities of the neighborhood. The third principle is that if the library plant is already in operation, it is a waste to exclude neighborhood groups from rooms not being used directly for the reading and circulation of books, inasmuch as overhead expenses continue.





## WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

A forecast, not of library progress alone, but of civilization itself, by one who declares himself "a simple-minded visionary optimist." It is of the warp and woof of visions like this that the fabric of a better world is woven. Frederick Morgan Crunden, who delivered this address at the public session of the Philadelphia Conference of the American Library Association, 1897, was not, it is true, the technical founder of the St. Louis Public Library, but in his thirty-year administration of it, he originated and kept in motion the forces that have given it the position that it now holds in the community. These forces and their results were both social, and his address forms a fitting conclusion to this compilation of material on "The Library and Society." A sketch of Mr. Crunden appears in Vol. I of this series.

The present Victorian jubilee has naturally brought out a fresh group of reminiscences comparing conditions at the beginning of the reign with those now existing. The most striking contrast between the two periods lies in the advances made in the material comforts of life—improvements in lighting and heating, in locomotion and intercommunication. The progress of applied science has been so rapid that some of its most notable achievements have come within the memory of young persons still at school. Telephonic conversation between New York and St. Louis is only a thing of yesterday; aerial navigation is evidently near at hand; and already daring scientists speak hopefully of electric communication with the planets.

But it is not only in this line that the world has advanced. To note great changes in social customs, we need not go back to the last century. Sir Algernon West in a recent magazine article refers to the matter-of-course manner in which his chief

was in the habit of announcing to the head clerk that he would not be at the office the following day, as he was to dine out that evening. As an indication of the social changes brought about in his lifetime, he quotes this significant sentence of Mr. Charles Villiers: "In his young days," said Mr. Villiers, "every young man, even if he was busy, pretended to be idle; now every young man, even if he is idle, pretends to be busy." There is great import in this. When every member of society is usefully employed, our social problems will be well on the way to solution.

To note progress in another direction we need not turn back to the acts of the 14th century, which made it a crime to give or receive more than the wretched wage fixed by law. At the beginning of the Victorian era boys and girls as young as six years worked in mines and factories longer hours than are now required of strong men; and the masses of people were compelled to pay an artificially high price for their bread, in order to increase the unearned wealth of the few.

And in our own country we need not go back to the Salem witchcraft or the persecution of the Quakers. There are still eye-witnesses to tell us that men and women in this "land of the free," were lawfully sold like cattle or flogged to death at the will of their owners. It was a few months after Queen Victoria's accession to the throne that Elijah Parish Lovejoy was killed for daring to say that human slavery was wrong—for advocating, not forcible abolition, but gradual emancipation as "the free, voluntary act of the master, performed from a conviction of its propriety." For maintaining his right to express his opinions on this or any other public question, he was driven from place to place and finally shot down in cold blood. In the city where 60 years ago he fell, a martyr to the cause of free speech, a stately monument—one of the most imposing in the country—was the other day dedicated to his memory. No American better deserves a monument. No leader in the Revolution or the Civil War was a greater hero. In my opinion, the unquestioned courage of the great Union commander is dwarfed and paled by the simple heroism of this young preacher-editor, who gave his life to a greater cause than even the preservation of the Union. Yet for some years after his death, in many cities of this country, it would have been hazardous for a man to utter his eulogy.

Here, then, is a marked advance. But we have not yet obtained entire freedom of speech on live topics. Was it not as late as last year that we hear of two librarians holding opposite political views, whose positions were rendered insecure by an unfortunate misadjustment of longitudes and political opinions? And not many miles from here a score of good, earnest men were jailed for advocating, disinterestedly, and at considerable self-sacrifice, a method of taxation that did not meet the approval of the city authorities. Still we have made great progress toward a broad tolerance. We not only permit the practice of all religious forms, but we even allow a man to deny himself the consolations of religion in any form if he chooses to do so.

In science, at least, there is absolute freedom of thought and expression. One may publish arguments to prove that the world is five thousand, or five hundred million years old, and no one will molest or denounce him; or he may announce a new theory of the universe with our moon as the stationary centre, and no state or church will anathematize him or compel him to recant. It is not till he enters the field of politics, i.e., the discussion of economic and sociological questions with a view to immediate practical results, that the advocate of new ideas reaches the danger-point. Here he finds vested interests—self-styled “vested rights,” but as often vested wrongs—on guard and alert to repel intrusion and resist inquiry. These summon to their aid the legions of unreasoning conservatism; and the innovator is made to feel the truth of the saying that there is no pain so keen as the pain of a new idea—from which, therefore, mankind has always shrunk, as a child shrinks from the surgeon’s knife. We have passed the period of rack and stake; but social and business ostracism are pretty effective, while occasionally there are suggestions of tar-buckets or bullets. For the most part, however, we content ourselves with denouncing the proposer of any marked departure from existing political or sociological conditions as a “socialist,” a “communist,” and an “anarchist,” using these terms indiscriminately as abusive epithets without any definite knowledge of their meaning. From the beginning of time every social advance—and until recently every forward step in science or religion has been regarded as menacing the very foundations of society. The Reform Act of 1832, which simply took the first step towards correcting the grossest political abuses, was looked upon

by the Duke of Wellington and other good men as threatening the very existence of the kingdom. The condition of affairs then existing, they considered, if not the best possible, at any rate vastly better than the political chaos that would be sure to result from change. Speaking on this blind conservative opposition to the Reform Bill, Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, said:

"All the resistance to these natural changes can effect is to derange their operation, and make them act violently and mischievously instead of healthfully, or at least harmlessly. The old state of things is gone past recall, and all the efforts of all the tories cannot save it; but they may by their folly, as they did in France, get us a wild democracy or a military despotism in the room of it, instead of letting it change quietly into what it is, merely a new modification of the old state. One would think that people who talk against change were literally as well as metaphorically blind, and really did not see that everything in themselves and around them is changing every hour by the necessary law of its being.

"There is nothing so revolutionary, because there is nothing so unnatural and so convulsive to society, as the strain to keep things fixed, when all the world is, by the very law of its creation, in eternal progress; and the cause of all the evils of the world may be traced to that natural but most deadly error of human indolence and corruption—that our business is to preserve and not to improve."

In his retrospect of the Victorian reign, in the June Review of Reviews, W. T. Stead says: "It is to the stoutest conservatives of our time almost inconceivable that rational beings could ever have defended the system that prevailed in Britain sixty years ago."

I am no more assured of the rising of to-morrow's sun than I am that to the stoutest conservatives of 1950, it will appear "almost inconceivable that rational beings could ever have defended the system" that prevails in America to-day. They will, however, resist further progress as doggedly as do the conservatives of to-day, even while these see plainly how absurd was the attitude of their predecessors of sixty years ago. Your genuine conservative ever holds doggedly to things as they are. He clings tenaciously—and vainly. He belongs to a party whose defeat all history teaches is foredoomed. Now he stands for the divine right of kings; and notwithstanding he is

a man of irreproachable character and able, moreover, to show that he is much less autocratic than most of his predecessors, he loses his crown and his head. Again, he stands for the parent country's unlimited power of taxation, and he forfeits his most flourishing colonies. At another period he urges long sufferance as a justification for continuing—even extending—the crime of slavery, and he meets defeat amid slaughter and devastation. No repetition of the lesson will ever teach him to consider what is abstractly right—what ought to be without reference to what is.

But the conservative has to be, in accordance with the law of nature, so poetically announced in the song of Willis in *Iolanthe*:

“That every boy and every gal  
That's born into this world alive,  
Is either a little Liberal,  
Or else a little Conservative!”

Or, as Emerson's prose expresses it—

“The two parties which divide the state—the party of conservatism and that of innovation—are very old and have disputed the possession of the world ever since it was made. This quarrel is the subject of civil history. The conservative party established the reverend hierarchies and monarchies of the most ancient world. The battle of patrician and plebeian, of parent state and colony, of old usage and accommodation to new facts, of the rich and the poor, reappears in all countries and times. . . .

“There is always a certain meanness in the argument of conservatism, joined with a certain superiority in its fact. It affirms because it holds. Its fingers clutch the fact, and it will not open its eyes to see a better fact. The castle which conservatism is set to defend is the actual state of things, good or bad. The project of innovation is the best possible state of things. Of course conservatism always has the worst of the argument, is always apologizing, pleading a necessity, pleading that to change would be to deteriorate. It must saddle itself with the mountainous load of the violence and the vice of society, must deny the possibility of good, deny ideas, and suspect and stone the prophets; while innovation is always in the right, triumphant, attacking, and sure of final success.”



But though doomed to defeat, conservatism is not to be denounced or condemned. It is not without its uses. It often keeps us from following untried paths that open out alluring but end in thickets or quagmires. A brake is sometimes as necessary to safety as motive power is to progress. But the usual tendency of conservatism is to keep the brakes on all the time, causing either stagnation, retrogression, or a smash-up. The real revolutionist is the rock-ribbed conservative. It is the boulder blocking the onward flow of the stream that causes the eddy and the whirlpool.

Those who think on this subject and who really desire the improvement of society—unfortunately a very small class—are divided over the question whether mankind shall progress by the path of individualism or by that of collectivism. Extremists assure us that these paths go in opposite directions, or traverse each other at right angles. The truth is they run parallel; and we have been travelling both, now advancing more on one and then on the other, towards the ultimate goal of humanity—the perfection of society through the elevation of the individual, the perfection of the individual through the improvement of society. Each helps the other; neither can be independent of the other. It often happens that organized society cannot await the slow process of individual perfection. It must accelerate the operation by changing standards and ideals. There is no telling how long it would have required to convince each individual slave-owner of the wrong of human slavery, or each individual mine and factory owner of the wickedness of child-labor. Society had to take the matter in hand and force individual development—in one case by law, in the other by the sword. Many thoughtful persons are raising the question whether society has not more work of this kind ahead of it. There can be no individual perfection or progress under certain social conditions. Ceremonious politeness was not to be expected among the victims of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Starvation has often led to cannibalism among men who would shrink with horror from the thought of it under ordinary conditions. Society can create conditions favorable or unfavorable to the improvement of the individual.

The inevitable outcome of the struggle between individualism and collectivism is the triumph of each in its own proper field.



A line drawn from the past to the present shows the trend of the future. We find this embodying two distinct, and apparently contradictory, tendencies—one towards greater individual freedom, the other towards a constant extension of the principle of cooperation, or collectivism. That is, organized society leaves ever greater freedom to the individual in all those things that concern only him, while at the same time it extends farther and farther its supervision and performance of those things that pertain to the welfare of all, and which society can do for the individual better than he can do for himself. A man may kiss his wife on Sunday without scandal or fear of prosecution; and he may dress in any manner he pleases within the bounds of convention, which is still an unreasoning tyrant. He is generally glad to avail himself of the more convenient water-supply provided by the community; but he may, if he wishes, have a well in his yard, until, with the growth of the city, this becomes a menace to his neighbors' health; then it must be closed. He may still mould his own tallow candles and use no other light if he prefers; but cooperation among consumers supplies him with a much superior illuminant; and when this cooperation is extended to embrace all the citizens—i.e., when gas or electricity is furnished by the municipality, the cost is reduced, and he becomes a partner in the profits.

Of the benefits of municipal cooperation we had a signal illustration in the introduction of municipal sprinkling in St. Louis. Formerly, the occupant of a fifty-foot lot paid a private contractor from \$6 to \$12 a season, while he suffered from the dust blown from his neighbors' frontage and from unsprinkled streets all over the city. Now the owner of a fifty-foot lot pays about \$1 a year and enjoys sprinkled streets throughout the whole city. Municipal cooperation in libraries brings the same kind of benefits. The average well-to-do reader, instead of a five-dollar subscription fee, pays a dollar tax; and for that not only he and his family, but also the families of his neighbors, have access to a superior library. And it is almost as necessary for your comfort that your neighbor's children have access to a library as for your own.

While social evolution tends to relieve the individual of the compulsion of law, and also to lessen the pressure of public opinion, in those affairs that pertain only to his own life, correlatively his action is more and more restricted in so

far as it affects his neighbors and society in general—though here, too, law and custom tend more and more to individual freedom. It was once regarded as a public scandal not to go to church; and 50 years ago in St. Louis Unitarians were shunned as suspicious characters. But *pari passu* with the growth of individual liberty has grown the recognition of the duty of society to see that all persons have equal liberty—to protect the weak against the strong. Nothing in Victoria's reign has done more for the progress of England than the series of acts that have been passed to curb the greed of mine and factory owners, to prevent them from coining the muscle and manhood of Britain into gold—in a way that, at one period, threatened to exhaust the vitality of the race—to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

The whole history of mankind is a continuous struggle of the weak and ignorant many to secure the rights withheld from them by the superior strength and cunning of the few. The oppression and injustice of the past are apparent to all; but many of us, like the conservative antagonists of Cobden and Bright, fail to see anything seriously wrong in the present; and, like them, we fear change. But it is the part of wise men to welcome change as the natural order of the universe—to see that it is a change for the better.

It does not by any means follow that every new idea is a good one, that every proposed change would be an improvement. But as progress is the law of the universe, it rests with the old order to show why it should be continued. Wisdom, therefore, urges us to give careful consideration to new ideas, however contrary they may be to prevalent opinions, bearing in mind the frequent lesson of history that "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner," and approaching all questions in the spirit of St. Paul's injunction: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." For all political and social problems, which are the burning questions of to-day, there is, it seems to me, a simple test in Herbert Spencer's "first principle": "Every man may claim the fullest liberty to exercise his faculties compatible with the possession of like liberty by every other man." Legislation that does not square with the self-evident truth and justice of this dictum is bad legislation, and must prove maleficent to the nation, state, or city that enacts it. I need not offer any modern instances.

Reasoning in reverse order, i.e., from effect to cause, we may be sure that when we see in a country abounding in natural resources, as ours is, inhabited by the most intelligent, energetic, and resourceful people the world has ever seen—when we see in such a country millions of willing workers in enforced idleness; when, to account for the idleness and its attendant want and destitution, we are offered the absurdity of “over-production” of the very things for which millions are suffering; when we see men and women who toil not revelling in luxury, while others who labor sixteen hours a day are barely able to keep body and soul together, we may know absolutely, without further investigation, that there is something fundamentally wrong in our social organization.

This is not the time or place to point out these wrongs specifically, or to advance, even in the most general terms, what, after much thought, I believe to be the remedies. I merely urge the thoughtful study of social problems without bias or prejudice. This state of openmindedness is not easy to achieve. We think that we think our own thoughts; but as Tarde, the French psychologist, says: “What the individual hypnotizer is to his sleeping and abnormally plastic subject, such, almost precisely, is society to the waking and normally plastic man.”<sup>1</sup>

On the solution of social problems, Ibsen says: “There is only one thing that avails—to revolutionize people’s minds.” This was a difficult task about so plain a matter as the Copernican system, which was opposed by the combined learning and piety of Europe. How much more difficult must it be when the change affects the every-day life of every individual? As Nitti says: “Had the propositions of Euclid affected economic interests they would still appear doubtful hypotheses of arduous solution.”

The public library is destined to play an important part, to exercise an incalculable influence in the solution of the social problems of to-day, and through this on the future of the nation and the race. The wisdom needed for this task is not to be obtained from schools or colleges, but from the higher education of mature minds—the masses of the people—which the public library alone can give. The preparation for this

<sup>1</sup> “As, then, in philosophy the first step is to begin by doubting everything, so, in social philosophy, the first step is to throw aside all supposed absolute rights.”—JEVONS.

higher education of the masses devolves on the schools and colleges. Their curricula should be so arranged as to arouse "historic consciousness" in the youngest child, to awaken social consciousness, and to provide for its continuous development by starting every boy and girl on a career of self-culture—by matriculating every child in the People's University, the Public Library. In affairs that concern society as a whole, it is better to trust the well-informed common-sense of the people than the learning of the schoolmen.

It is not knowledge of mathematics or physics, or Greek and Latin, or modern languages; it is not the study—academic study—of history, or philosophy, or even political economy, that will solve the great social problems that now confront us. These will help in various degrees, directly or indirectly, some more, some less, some, perhaps, not at all. A knowledge of the general course of history is essential; some acquaintance with philosophy is useful; dogmatic theology serves only to confuse, but the true religion that lies in a vital acceptance of Christ's two commandments as a summary of the law and the prophets—that is the greatest aid of all. Such, however, is the influence of established order on men's minds that no investigation will avail without a determination to take nothing for granted, to re-examine what have been considered basic principles, to accept no postulates that do not square with reason and justice. This cannot be done by confining our reading to the accepted standards of a generation or a century ago. We must keep abreast of the thought of the time; we must keep our eyes and ears, and still more our minds, open; we must scorn no aids to enlightenment; but we must do our own thinking; we must consider the idea, not the source from which it came, remembering that good may come out of Nazareth; we must live up to the motto; "Truth for authority, not authority for truth," and we must "lend a hand."

My faith in the efficacy of the education offered by the public library is not without foundation. In more than one case I have seen a course of lectures or the reading of a single book lead to a course of reading in economics and sociology, which has entirely changed points of view. New ideals, higher standards, have made new men with higher lines of action. Their natures have not been changed, but their visions have been clarified.

One of the stock arguments which conservatism always brings out to give a final quietus to any proposal for social reform, is—"Oh, that's impossible; you'd have to change human nature!" This mental attitude, which, I am sorry to say, is the prevailing one with the great majority of mankind, is admirable satirized in some verses which I had great pleasure in printing in the April number of the St. Louis Public Library Magazine:

There was once a Neolithic Man, an enterprising wight,  
Who made his simple instruments unusually bright,  
Unusually clever he, unusually brave.  
And he sketched delightful mammoths on the border of his cave,  
To his Neolithic neighbors who were startled and surprised,  
Said he: "My friends, in course of time we shall be civilized!  
We are going to live in cities and build churches and make laws!  
We are going to eat three times a day without the natural cause!  
We're going to turn life upside down about a thing called Gold!  
We're going to want the earth, and take as much as we can hold!  
We are going to wear a pile of stuff outside our proper skins;  
We're going to have Diseases! and Accomplishments!! and  
Sins!!!

Then they all rose up in fury against this boastful friend  
For prehistoric patience comes quickly to an end.  
Said one, "This is chimerical! Utopian! Absurd!"  
Said another, "What a stupid life! Too dull, upon my word!"  
Cried all, "Before such things can come, you idiotic child,  
You must alter Human Nature!" and they all sat back and  
smiled!

Thought they, "An answer to that last it will be hard to find!"  
It was a clinching argument—to the Neolithic Mind!

Yes, great progress and reform can be accomplished without changing human nature. The elemental forces in the heart of man are the same now as in the earliest recorded ages, and they are likely to remain the same for all time to come. We cannot change the elements of man's nature; but by changing conditions we can improve the product of reaction. We can elevate conduct by elevating ideals. There was a time when the man who could wield the heaviest battle-axe was the greatest man; and there are still circles in which Corbett and Fitzsimmons are regarded as the greatest men of the present day. But the men who now excite most general admiration are our "cap-



tains of industry," the men who succeed in getting money and the luxury and power it commands. How shall we elevate our national ideals?

Selfishness is a mainspring of human action. A like motive, desire for happiness, sets men to fighting dogs and to founding hospitals. Nero found pleasure in one way, Marcus Aurelius in another. Charles I. and Louis XVI. were not bad men; but they were controlled by outgrown standards. Elizabeth, Napoleon, Peter, and Catherine of Russia sought their own pleasure in accordance with their personal characters and the standards of their times. But how much higher and purer pleasure the devotion of their talents to the service of their fellowmen brought to Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln, Cobden, Bright and Gladstone—and John Pounds!

False standards, low ideals, now lead many good men to find their pleasure, not in cruelty, not in sensuality, but in the accumulation of wealth, partly for the luxury, chiefly for the power it brings. "Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer."

With the spread of intelligence and thought, and the consequent elevation of popular ideals, men possessed of millions will not seek to add to their large legitimate gains by legalized robbery from their fellow-citizens; and people calling themselves Christians will not rejoice in the distress and starvation of their fellow-men across the ocean. Men will still be selfish but their selfishness will at least be on a higher plane—less intense, less destructive of essential rights.

How shall we most speedily bring about this desired consummation? By what agency can we most effectively elevate our national ideals? By extending and improving our system of popular education, by reversing the usual order and beginning where school curricula now end, by placing our school-children from their earliest years in close and familiar contact with the life and thought of the race as expressed in literature, by exciting in every child admiration and emulation of the world's true heroes, by feeding the imagination and cultivating the moral faculties, by putting every child into the way of acquiring a social and a historic perspective.

I suppose I am one of those simple-minded visionary optimists of whom Prof. Royce speaks. But I do not "dislike" economic facts in the sense of ignoring them, and I am not blind

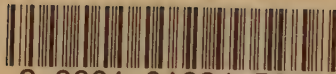


to the persistence of the elemental forces of human nature. But as the abolition of slavery changed men's mental attitude towards this social crime, without at all changing human nature, just so I believe that the adoption of other social reforms would in a generation cause all men to look with horror and wonder upon social injustice that nearly every one now ignores or regards as irremediable and inevitable. I share Ruskin's scorn of the word "Utopian." "A thing is either possible or impossible." As Carlyle says, "The actual final rights of man lie in the far deeps of the ideal. Every noble work is at first impossible." In the A.L.A. we have heard the word "Utopian," or its equivalent, on more than one occasion met by the motto, "Hitch your wagon to a star"; and we have seen the impracticable an accomplished fact.

If time permitted I might risk ridicule by presenting some features of the vision that I see with the eye of faith in an all-wise and all-powerful Creator and belief in human perfectibility as an infinite progress.

"Die Zukunft decket  
Schmerzen and Glücke  
Schrittweis' dem Blicke;  
Doch ungeschreckt,  
Dringen wir vorwärts."

"New occasions teach new duties;  
Time makes ancient good uncouth!  
They must upward still and onward  
Who would keep abreast with truth."



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